

Local Members' Interest
N/A

Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee – 23 January 2014

Educational Achievement in Staffordshire, 2014

Recommendations

1. That the Select Committee note the progress of Educational Achievement in Staffordshire for the period September 2013- August 2014
2. That the Select Committee provides comment and recommendations in regard to the approach set out in the report, including the draft Excellent Schools – Outcome Delivery Plan for 2015/16 business year

Report of Ben Adams, Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills

Summary

Staffordshire's schools are improving. The educational achievement and attainment reported for 2013/14 demonstrates progress in a number of key areas, notably the proportion of schools judged good or outstanding by Ofsted and the trend of improvement across many aspects of key stage attainment.

Progress toward our target of 90% of schools being graded as good or outstanding by summer 2016 is still on track, and solid progress has been made toward this. The number of pupils receiving a good education has increased with 74% of pupils attending a good or outstanding school, an increase of 11 percentage points since 2012.

Levels of attainment and progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are excellent and continue to outperform national levels of performance.

Our focus in 2014/15 will be at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 where our schools need to accelerate improvements to gain ground in the rates of progress achieved by our statistical neighbours and nationally. Staffordshire schools also need to do more to tackle variations in attainment between districts and for different pupil groups, such as those eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) or Pupil Premium (PP).

Report

Background

1. Over the past few years, the way education works in Staffordshire (and across the country) has changed. Schools are becoming more independent from local authorities and as a result, there are new roles and responsibilities around school improvement.
2. Staffordshire's Head teachers and school governors are responsible for the performance of their schools and have access to a network of support and positive challenge to ensure that their school's strengths are maximised and that any areas for development are addressed.
3. Support for school improvement comes from the school governing body and from the formal partnerships that schools are part of, be that trust, federation, diocesan group or through an academy sponsor – but schools can also expect the county council to monitor school performance and for the council to support them to accelerate their efforts to improve. The county council can use legal powers to intervene in any case where we find failure.
4. The academic year 2013/14 saw many key developments in regard to school improvement in Staffordshire.
5. Notably, a new strategy "Achieving Excellence in Learning and Skills" was launched and a new approach to school challenge, support and intervention was implemented through our "Framework for School Improvement"
6. Alongside these strategic developments the Learning and Skills function has reshaped to respond to four interdependent commissioning questions:
 - a. Have we got the right provision in the right place to meet local needs and statutory obligations? (Access to Learning)
 - b. Is the provision the best that it can be, including quality, impact and outcomes for learners? (Education Excellence)
 - c. Does each individual get their fair chance to achieve and thrive? (Inclusion and Wellbeing)
 - d. Does this lead to jobs, growth, prosperity and independent adult life? (Skills and Employability)
7. Through these functions the council undertakes a range of statutory responsibilities including the "duty to promote high standards and the fulfilment of potential" (Education Act 1996 s13A). Working with our school improvement delivery partner, Entrust, the county council has continued to deliver actions to promote improved standards and performance in all Staffordshire schools – both maintained and academies.
8. The county council has continued to review and evaluate the impact of Staffordshire's school improvement approach, which is captured through a Self-Evaluation Form (SEF).

9. Priorities and progress on school improvement, including the SEF and related action plans, have been managed and monitored through the council's Ofsted Programme Board. This board has recently been reconfigured into the Education Standards and Performance Board, with an extended remit and membership to enable effective management and monitoring of educational achievement across all ages and stages of learning.
10. This report is an overview of school performance and standards in Staffordshire. It shows how Staffordshire's schools have performed in the 2013/14 academic year and outlines county council action to develop and accelerate school improvement as part of the "Excellent Schools and Settings" pillar of the Learning and Skills Strategy.

Strategic Overview of Educational Achievement Staffordshire 2014

11. This report summarises high-level performance and trends for educational attainment and progress across Staffordshire which is reported fully in Strategic Overview of Educational Achievement 2014
12. This analysis shows that pupils generally start well, with high levels of attainment recorded at Early Years and Key Stage One. Staffordshire is showing improvement in the percentage of pupils achieving a Good Level of Development in the Early Years Foundation Stage and at a higher rate than that recorded nationally. However, despite also recording improvements pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are not improving at the same rate as other pupils in the cohort. There are also differences in district level performance; with the biggest improvements seen in Stafford, Cannock Chase and Tamworth districts.
13. Staffordshire performs above the national average in reading, writing and maths at Key Stage One and the gap for SEN and free school meal (FSM) eligible pupils and their peers is reducing. However, writing in particular is not improving at a fast enough rate, with Staffordshire moving into the second quartile of national performance in 2014.
14. Once pupils reach Key Stage Two performance across Staffordshire in external assessments is less consistent. Results have seen positive increases in 2014 although this trend will need to continue to accelerate in order to move Staffordshire out of the bottom quartile for reading and maths. Reading in particular is a priority for Staffordshire; although there are recorded improvements in attainment and progress, other local authorities are improving at a faster rate in this subject.
15. Staffordshire's Key Stage Four (GCSE) results are positive when compared with the national average but the county moved down the national rankings between 2013 and 2014 for the percentage of pupils achieving five or more grade A* to C

(including English and maths) and progress from KS2 to KS4. Therefore, improvement at a faster pace is needed. There is also still evidence of gaps in attainment of some student groups, with girls and non-FSM pupils' performance increasing at a higher rate than that of boys and FSM pupils. GCSE results also show the greatest variation of any Key Stage at a district level, with Tamworth and Cannock Chase in particular showing lower than average levels of attainment.

16. Performance at post-16 (A level & equivalent) remains below the national average but the gap is reducing, with Staffordshire improving at a faster rate than other local authorities nationally. Staffordshire performs particularly well in vocational qualifications, which are above the national average and show an increase between 2013 and 2014. However, district variations suggest that there is still scope for improvement.

Staffordshire Summary of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools Report and Ofsted's West Midlands Regional Report 2013/ 2014

17. The annual report from Ofsted shows that:

18. Staffordshire Primary Schools

The proportion of Staffordshire primary school children now in good or outstanding schools has improved by 6 percentage points since 2012/13. The local authority is now ranked equal 107th in relation all 150 local authorities in England. This is an improvement of 14 places from equal 121st in 2012/13. The local authority is now placed within the 4th quintile in relation to all 150 local authorities. When compared with the 11 statistical neighbours, Staffordshire is ranked 8th and recorded the equal highest improvement in 2013/14.

19. Staffordshire Secondary Schools

Staffordshire is named as one of only five local authorities within the West Midlands to have shown an improvement in the proportion of students attending a good or outstanding secondary school. Staffordshire recorded an improvement of 4 percentage points since 2012/13. The local authority is ranked equal 92nd in 2013/14 when compared to all 150 local authorities in England. This is an improvement of 10 places from equal 102nd in 2012/13. Although Staffordshire remains within the 4th quintile, the county is only two places below the 3rd quintile in relation to all 150 local authorities. When compared with the 11 statistical neighbours, Staffordshire is ranked 7th and recorded the 3rd highest improvement in 2013/14.

Ofsted Framework for Inspecting Local Authority School Improvement (LASI) Function

20. A revised inspection framework came into force in November 2014 which included

two key changes in Ofsted's arrangements for inspecting local authorities. The first is that Focused Inspections, which previously operated outside of the framework, have been encompassed into the new arrangement and form part of the methodology for LASI inspections. The second is that the previous judgment of "effective" or "ineffective" is replaced by a narrative judgment.

21. Ofsted targets LASI inspections based on risk assessment and there are eight criteria that Ofsted use to determine their decision to inspect. Three of these criteria relate directly to the performance of attainment and progress:

a) *"attainment levels across the local authority are lower than the national average and/or where the trend of improvement is weak":*

In Staffordshire EYFS performs above the national average and has a trend of improvement. At Key Stage 1 the county performs above the national average, though the local trend is more static than national. At Key Stage 2 attainment in reading, writing and maths have increased between 2013 and 2014. However, only results in writing are above the national average. Key Stage 4 (GCSE) attainment in Staffordshire is above the national average. Post-16 performance shows that Staffordshire has closed the gap with national over the past five years but still performs below the national average.

b) *"rates of progress, relative to starting points, are lower than the national average and/or where the trend of improvement is weak":*

Progress between Key Stage 1 and 2 has improved in reading, writing and maths between 2013 and 2014, however all are below the national average. The gap is, however, closing in relation to writing and maths. Progress between Key Stage 2 and 4 is below the national average. Pupils achieving the expected level of progress in maths declined by just over 6 percentage points between 2013 and 2014, compared with a national decline of just over 5 points.

c) *"pupils eligible for the pupil premium achieve less well than pupils not eligible for the pupil premium nationally":*

With the exception of attainment at Key Stage 2, pupils eligible for the pupil premium in Staffordshire out-perform the same cohort of pupils nationally.

22. In summary, against these criteria, performance would indicate that inspection is less likely than in the previous year. However, achievement would need to continue to improve further over the current academic year in order to mitigate more fully the risks that could trigger inspection.

Attainment Summaries

23. The following section provides an overview of performance within Staffordshire at each key stage in 2014. 'Quartile' relates to Staffordshire's position nationally (with the 1st, or top, quartile being the best position) and 'trend' indicates direction of travel

since 2013.

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

Subject/Level	Staffs Trend	2014 Results			National Quartile (1st = top)	National Rank (out of 152)
		Staffordshire	Statistical Neighbours	England		
Good Level of Development	↑	64%	61%	60%	2nd	30

24. Staffordshire is ranked within the second quartile nationally, with 64% of pupils achieving a Good Level of Development in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staffordshire results have improved in 2014 and Staffordshire's ranking against statistical neighbour authorities and all authorities nationally has also improved.

KEY STAGE ONE: TEACHER ASSESSMENTS

Subject/Level	Staffs Trend	2014 Results			National Quartile (1st = top)	National Rank (out of 149)
		Staffordshire	Statistical Neighbours	England		
L2+ Reading	↑	91%	90%	90%	2nd	26
L2+ Writing	↔↔	88%	87%	86%	2nd	25
L2+ Maths	↔↔	93%	93%	91%	2nd	34

25. Staffordshire's strong performance in Key Stage One showed minimal change in 2014; with only reading results, at the expected level, improving on 2013 results. The Staffordshire-national gap remained static in reading and reduced in writing and maths meaning that Staffordshire results are only one or two percentage points above national.

26. Whereas Staffordshire has maintained good performance other authorities have improved which means that Staffordshire's rank against statistical neighbours has reduced in reading, writing and maths and has fallen compared to all authorities in writing and maths. Reading, writing and maths results are in the second quartile nationally whereas writing results were in the top quartile in 2013.

KEY STAGE TWO: TEACHER ASSESSMENTS AND TESTS

Subject/Level	Staffs Trend	2014 Results			National Quartile (1st = top)	National Rank (out of 150)
		Staffordshire	Statistical Neighbours	England		
L4+ Reading	↑	88%	89%	89%	3rd	111
L4+ Writing	↑	86%	86%	85%	3rd	62
L4+ Maths	↑	86%	86%	86%	4th	103
L4+ Reading, Writing & Maths	↑	78%	79%	79%	3rd	99
Expected Progress Reading	↑	89%	91%	91%	4th	120
Expected Progress Writing	↑	92%	93%	93%	4th	100
Expected Progress Maths	↑	87%	89%	89%	4th	130

27. In 2014, in Key Stage Two, Staffordshire's reading; writing and maths results have increased for pupils achieving at the expected level.

28. Staffordshire narrowed the gap on national in maths and the gap remained static in reading and writing, meaning that Staffordshire's 2014 results were a percentage point above national in writing, inline in maths and a percentage point below in reading. Staffordshire's result in the combined measure was below national in 2014 by one percentage point, whereas in 2013 they were in-line with national. Therefore, improvement locally was out-paced by national gains on this measure.

29. Staffordshire's results in writing and the combined measure are in the third quartile nationally and reading and maths are positioned in the bottom quartile. This means that reading and writing results place Staffordshire in a lower quartile in 2014 than in 2013.

Staffordshire results improved in the reading, writing and maths expected progress measures, and closed the gap with national in the writing and maths measures. Staffordshire's expected progress results remain in the bottom quartile, but Staffordshire's rank against all local authorities did improve in reading and writing in 2014.

KEY STAGE THREE: TEACHER ASSESSMENTS

Subject/Level	Staffs Trend	2014 Results			National Quartile (1st = top)	National Rank (out of n/a)
		Staffordshire	Statistical Neighbours	England		
L5+ English	↑	90%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
L5+ Maths	↑	86%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
L5+ Science	↑	89%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

30. The submission of Key Stage Three teacher assessments by schools was not compulsory in 2014. There is no national collection so as a result there are no results for statistical neighbours or national to provide a comparison. Staffordshire results have improved in all three subjects at the expected level but caution must be exercised as only around three quarters of Staffordshire schools returned teacher assessment results in 2014.

KEY STAGE FOUR: GCSEs AND EQUIVALENT

Subject/Level	Staffs Trend	2014 Results			National Quartile (1st = top)	National Rank (out of 151)
		Staffordshire	Statistical Neighbours	England		
5+ A*-C including English & Maths	n/a	54.4%	56.0%	52.6%	3rd	96
5+ A*-C	n/a	64.3%	65.9%	63.2%	3rd	94
Expected Progress English	n/a	68.4%	69.6%	70.9%	4th	115
Expected Progress Maths	n/a	61.7%	65.3%	65.3%	4th	113

31. 2014 Key Stage Four results are not directly comparable to those from previous years as a result of changes introduced by the Secretary of State in September 2013

and as a result of the Wolf review¹ of the curriculum impacting on what qualifications count toward key measures.

32. Staffordshire's 5+ A*-C including English and maths and 5+ A*-C results were both above the national average. The gap between Staffordshire and national positively increased in the 5+ A*-C including English and maths measure but both results are still in the 3rd quartile and Staffordshire's rank compared to all authorities fell in both measures.

33. Staffordshire results in the English and maths expected progress measures were in the fourth quartile nationally compared to the third quartile in 2013 and were below national and statistical neighbour averages. Rankings against all authorities also declined in both subjects.

KEY STAGE FIVE: A-LEVEL AND EQUIVALENT, POST 16

Subject/Level	Staffs Trend	2014 Results			National Quartile (1st = top)	National Rank (out of 149)
		Staffordshire	Statistical Neighbours	England		
APS per Entry	↑	210.5	209.3	213.4	3rd	81

34. In 2014, Staffordshire's results improved marginally on 2013 results in the Average Points Score per Entry measure (0.1 of a point) and this represent an upward trend since 2010. Staffordshire continued to narrow the gap with national, reducing the gap to 2.9 points in 2014 from 13.1 in 2010.

35. Staffordshire's rank against statistical neighbours and all authorities also improved in 2014. Staffordshire's result remains in the third quartile nationally.

Staffordshire's Self Evaluation

36. The county council has continued to review and evaluate the impact of Staffordshire's school improvement approach. This is captured through a Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) and the SEF reflecting on 2013/14 reveals:

37. Staffordshire's self-evaluation of 2013/14 tells us that significant progress has been made over the last 12 months. The number of pupils receiving a good education has increased with 75% of pupils attending a good or outstanding school, an increase of 12 percentage points since August 2012. With the percentage of schools retaining or achieving a good or outstanding Ofsted grade, this is improving the gap between the local authority and national figures. Gaps in performance are narrowing; in early years 64% of pupils now achieve a good level of development, compared to 54% in 2013. At KS1 performance against national averages remains strong. Improvements

¹ The Secretary of State for Education announced that, with effect from 29th September 2013, only a student's first entry to a GCSE examination will count in their school's performance tables. 2014 figures in this report are for 'first' entry, this is inline with the announced changes. Please note that 2014 results are not directly comparable with 2013 results. Please read further guidance available from the Department for Education here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/changes-to-early-entry-at-gcse>

in reading, writing and mathematics at KS2 mirror the national picture for 2014; however pupil progress measures at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 remain an issue. Staffordshire's commissioning approach to school improvement has matured with its partner Entrust and developed in its first full year of operation. There is now clear evidence of the impact of this new approach in tackling school improvement issues, evident in the fact that 79% of schools are rated as good and outstanding in August 2014, compared with the baseline of 65% in August 2012. Through a clear strategy and robust operating mechanisms the county council is increasingly effective in supporting and challenging schools to improve, securing a realistic trajectory for all schools to be good or outstanding by 2020

38. Staffordshire has made positive progress against a range of key measures over the last 12 months. EYFS results show that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is increasing and at a higher rate than national performance. Key stage one results are positive showing that attainment at L2b+ has improved in all subjects since 2010; alongside this the gender gap and the gap between those in receipt of free school meals and those who aren't is closing. In Key Stage 2 attainment and progress data demonstrates an upward trend with regard to reading, writing and maths. Although performance is still below the national average (with the exception of writing), the gap is closing with Staffordshire generally improving at a faster rate.
39. Priorities and progress on school improvement, including the SEF and related action plans, have been managed and monitored through the council's Ofsted Programme Board. This board has recently been reconfigured into the Education Standards and Performance Board, with an extended remit and membership to enable effective management and monitoring of educational achievement across all ages and stages of learning.

Emerging Priorities for 2015/16 Business Planning Year

40. The priority that Staffordshire has placed on Key Stage 2 performance has seen schools delivering improvements in attainment and this focus needs to continue, particularly in relation to expected rates of progress in reading, writing and maths. This is echoed in Key Stage 4 where progress in maths and English are also a priority for improvement.
41. Closing the gaps by tackling variations in attainment between localities and different pupil groups is a further priority highlighted through this report.
42. The improvements made in the number of schools graded as good or outstanding by Ofsted is a positive achievement in 2013/14 but Staffordshire's target to reach 90% of schools at this level by August 2016 means that further action is needed for

schools currently judged as “requiring improvement” or identified by the authority as being at risk of declining outcomes.

43. These priorities carry forward our current approach, reinforcing and enhancing the focus of the council’s school improvement priorities in 2013/14 and 2014/15.

44. In addition to this, and in line with the council’s strategic vision for excellent schools and settings, there are five strategic features that we are discussing and promoting with schools. These are:

- a. All schools/settings are good or outstanding
- b. All schools/settings are sound and sustainable
- c. All schools/settings are in effective support and challenge networks
- d. All schools/settings support fair access and share local accountability
- e. All schools/settings contribute to community cohesion and resilience

45. A draft outcomes plan (Appendix A) is being shaped to inform the Learning and Skills team’s strategic and business planning for 2015/16. Select Committee are invited to provide comment and feedback to further shape our way forward.

Link to Strategic Plan – Ready for Life

Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity –

- **Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee** – The Ofsted Focused Inspection of Staffordshire. 5th September 2014
- **Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee** – Education and Support Services – Commissioning and Contract Performance Report for School Improvement. 5th September 2014
- **Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee** – Executive response to the Working Group Report on the Ofsted Inspections of Local Authority School Improvement Arrangements.

Appendices:

Appendix A- Draft outcomes plan for 2015/16

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