

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda
Item No.

Report of Corporate Director of Children & Learning

to
Cabinet

on

7th January 2014

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Learning and Improvement

Report on Early Years and School Standards Peoples' Scrutiny Committee – Executive Councillor: Councillor James Courtenay

Part 1 Agenda Item

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To advise Members of the educational standards achieved by Southend pupils at the end of the academic year 2012-2013 and the rate of exclusions and school absence during the same time period.
- 1.2 To advise Members of the inspection outcomes for schools inspected under the new Framework.
- 1.3 To make Members aware that the performance data included within this report is validated (Primary) and invalidated (secondary).
- 1.4 To advise Members of Southend's position in relation to Local Authorities nationally and regionally.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Cabinet notes school performance and inspection outcomes
- 2.2 That Cabinet notes the approach to schools causing concern
- 2.3 That Cabinet notes the implementation of the Southend Challenge, (the strategy for the third and final year of Improving Learning Together), together with its aspiration of increasing the level of challenge within and between schools.

3. Background

- 3.1 We are now entering the third year of 'Improving Learning Together', Southend's school improvement strategy. Whilst there are positive signs of improvement in the quality of education and academic outcomes achieved, there continue to be areas that need addressing as a matter of urgency.
- 3.2 Overall achievement has improved at all key stages. Some aspects of achievement are better than found nationally, for example writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1. However the Free School Meals Gap did not reduce in 2013 and as a result, eligible children are lagging behind their peers at the end of Key Stage 2 and further behind at Key Stage 4, (GCSE). The gap however starts earlier, with the good level of development (GLD) at the Early

Years Foundation Stage, highlighting a gap between all children and those eligible for Free School Meals.

- 3.3 With two exceptions, all schools inspected under the new Framework, at least maintained their previous judgement. But Southend's schools are not improving at a fast enough rate overall, evidenced by the higher proportion of schools maintaining rather than improving on their previous best. The performance in the primary phase when compared with all Local Authorities and those regionally is low.
- 3.4 When analysing performance school by school, one can see which schools are making a positive difference and which are not. The entire spectrum of quality is represented in Southend, with schools judged as outstanding in all categories, set alongside schools with inadequacies in the majority of aspects.
- 3.5 Southend's school improvement strategy is concerned with sustainable and deep improvement in order to secure whole system transformation. Therefore, **Improving Learning Together** is built on the ambition of having a single, coherent outstanding school system, with the weakest supported, challenged and enabled by the strongest. 2013-2014 is concerned with raising every school's game in order for a 'good' judgement to become an attainable goal.
- 3.6 The strengthening of school leadership and governance has been a key aspect of the strategy this year:

Example 1: During 2012-2013, two further Executive Headships were established in the primary phase, with experienced headteachers from outstanding schools taking on the challenge of leading and strengthening two vulnerable schools. Both schools have since had satisfactory HMI monitoring reports.

Example 2: In the secondary phase, the headteacher of an outstanding school took on the role of Executive Officer for a vulnerable secondary school, coaching and mentoring the new head in their task of securing rapid improvement. In half a term, attendance has improved and exclusions reduced to less than half of those recorded during the previous half term.

Example 3: In the special phase, the opening of Seabrook College saw the federation of two vulnerable schools, The Renown Centre for Learning and Priory School, to create a single stronger provision under an experienced Executive Headteacher, recruited from an outstanding London school. The Prittlewell Site of Seabrook College can now recruit newly qualified teachers, a strong and early sign of its readiness to be removed from Ofsted category.

Example 4: Additional governors were appointed to two governing bodies with the brief of adding capacity and challenge.

Example 5: Interim Executive Boards replaced governing bodies in two schools, both of which were in Ofsted category.

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 For Southend to improve its performance to securely above national for both academic performance and inspection outcomes, decisive and challenging intervention continues to be required in a small number of schools including:
- a) Those performing below the national floor standard for attainment and/or progress when this was not predicted
 - b) Those where there are concerns about leadership and/or school governance
 - c) Those with financial difficulties
- 4.2 Whilst performance overall is not declining, when compared with other authorities, it is not fast enough. The Southend Challenge aims to ensure that all schools increase their level of challenge within their own schools and towards one another.

5. Southend's Results 2012-2013

- 5.1 At Key Stage 1, pupils' overall achievement was broadly in line with that found nationally and had improved on the results achieved in 2012. The results were significantly above national in writing and mathematics for more able children at level 3+.

At Key Stage 2, the attainment of pupils increased by 3% from 2012, closing the gap between the achievement of pupils in Southend and those found nationally. The percentage making at least two levels of progress from Key Stage 1 was in line with national for writing but significantly below in reading, writing and maths. Four schools performed above and three performed below the floor standards of 60%. The floor standard is a combined percentage of those achieving level 4+ in English and maths and making expected progress in reading, writing and maths.

At Key Stage 4, four of the non-selective schools made significant improvements in the key performance indicator of 5 A*-C including English and mathematics of between 7 and 21%. One school saw their results decline by a small percentage and three schools performed below the 40% floor threshold. The progress made by pupils in English was the same as that made nationally and 2% above national in Maths. 62% of pupils achieved 5 or more A*-C GCSE including English and Maths which was 2% above that achieved nationally.

The Free School Meals Gap was not narrowed in 2013. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, 25.7% of children who are eligible for Free School Meals reached a good level of development compared with 44.9% of all children. The gap was much narrower at both Key Stages 1 and 2, but eligible children at the end of Key Stage 2 are on average 3 terms behind their peers. At Key Stage 4 free school meals pupils are on average two GCSE grades behind. Closing the free school meals gap is a key priority.

At the end of the academic year 2012-2013, 35 out of 54 schools were judged good or outstanding in their most recent Ofsted inspection and 15 were judged to require improvement. Two schools were judged as inadequate during the academic year.

Southend Ofsted July 2013	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
Sep-12	10	27	16	1
Sep-13	9	26	15	3
Change	-1	-1	-1	2

5.2 Early Years Foundation Stage

A significant strength is the high percentage (85%) of early year's settings that are judged good or outstanding exceeding the national average of 77%. Whilst the overall outcome of 45.4% is lower than that for the previous year, this is due to the changes in the EYFS framework and in the assessment process.

5.3 Year 1 Phonics Screening Check

These results improved by 12% from the previous year. Results indicate 64% of pupils met the expected level compared to a national figure of 69%. Although this demonstrates that schools have focussed on improving the outcomes in phonics and their access to early literacy, schools still need to ensure more children reach the expected standard. For those pupils who did not reach the expected standards in 2012 and were re-checked in 2013 in Year 2, 70% reached the expected standard.

5.4 Key Stage 1

2011

	Level 2+%		Level 2b+%		Level 3+%	
	ALL	FSM	ALL	FSM	ALL	FSM
Reading	85.1	75.0	75.3	58.7	30.2	13.5
Writing	82.0	70.4	63.0	42.6	14.1	4.3
Maths	89.9	83.7	76.0	61.0	25.1	11.5

2012

	Level 2+%		Level 2b+%		Level 3+%	
	ALL	FSM	ALL	FSM	ALL	FSM
Reading	86.6	75.9	75.7	60.1	31.7	15.8
Writing	84.5	72.4	64.4	45.2	15.1	6.2
Maths	88.9	78.6	75.2	60.4	23.9	11.1

2013

	Level 2+%		Level 2b+%		Level 3+%	
	ALL	FSM	ALL	FSM	ALL	FSM
Reading	88	77	78	63	31	16
Writing	84	73	67	51	17	7
Maths	90	81	76	60	26	14

Whilst the results overall indicate improvements from the previous year, the free school meals gap is still too wide at all levels and in all subjects. Closing this gap is a top priority for 2014.

5.5 Key Stage 2

	2011	2012	2013
%L4+English and maths	74	76	74
% 2 levels+ progress in English	81	87	**Reading 86 Writing 90
% 2 levels+ progress in maths	82	85	85

**The assessment process for English changed in 2013 and the writing component is now assessed through teacher assessment and the results are therefore not comparable with the previous year.

Four primary schools achieved above the floor targets in all of the measures in 2013. The majority of schools are above floor (60%) for attainment in English and maths and the main focus is on improving the progress made in English and Maths.

5.5 Key Stage 4

The 5A*-C GCSE with English and maths threshold was 40% this year. Three schools have fallen below this threshold and have below 70% of students making expected progress and are therefore below the government floor targets. All three schools were subject to an LA review of the school and governance in the autumn term. Four schools showed an increase in the numbers of students gaining 5A*-C with English and Maths. Overall Southend LA is still above the national average, although there was a slight reduction from last year.

The percentage of students who make expected progress in Maths has continued to increase with four schools continuing to improve performance in this area. The number of students making expected progress in English has however decreased in a number of schools and this is a priority area for school improvement. Three schools did, however, show improvements in the numbers of students making progress in English.

5.6 The performance of children eligible for Pupil premium

Pupil Premium Gap KS2	2012*	2013
Reading	-3 terms	-3 terms
Writing	-3 terms	-3 terms
Grammar, punctuation and spelling	Not part of testing process	-3 terms
Maths	-3 terms	-3 terms

Pupil Premium Gap KS4		2012	2013
5A*-C with English and Maths	with and	31% (71%)	30% (74%)
Expected progress in English	in	43% (77%)	41% (74%)
Expected progress in Maths	in	43 % (79%)	45% (82%)

*The categorisation of pupils eligible for free school meals changed in 2012, hence data is not comparable before this date.

At KS2 the gap has not closed for pupils eligible for free school meals and they remain on average one year behind their peers at the end of KS2, this gap widens in secondary school to KS4 with pupil premium pupils achieving on average two grades lower at GCSE than their peers. The major focus of the Southend challenge is to reduce this gap across Southend schools.

5.7 The performance of looked after children at all key stages

In 2012/13 there was a cohort of 11 looked after children in Year 6, at the end of Key Stage 2. 73% of the cohort reached Level 4 in reading and 55% in maths. Eight of the children made at least 2 levels of progress from their starting points at the end of KS1 (generally considered 'good' progress).

In 2012/13 there was a cohort of 28 looked after children in the Borough at the end of KS4. 50% achieved 5A*-C with English and Maths.

These figure also includes looked after children from outside the Borough in Southend schools.

5.8 Exclusions

The number of exclusions continued to decline with just one permanent exclusion during the academic year. The total number of fixed term exclusions fell below one thousand sessions for the first time in four years. Schools have prioritised the development of alternative sanctions and these changes are having a positive impact especially notable in the secondary sector. There is a strong commitment by schools to avoiding a permanent exclusion as evidenced by the strong performance.

Fixed Term Exclusions

Academic year	Primary	Secondary	Special	Total
2009/10*	113	1026	119	1260
2010/11*	97	1301	44	1440
2011/12*	84	985	21	1090
2012/13**	87	740	85	912

*DfE published statistics

** Invalidated Southend figures

Permanent Exclusions

Academic year	Primary	Secondary	Special	Total
2009/10	0	5	0	5
2010/11	0	4	0	4
2011/12	1	5	5	7
2012/13	0	1	0	1

5.9 Absence from Southend Schools (2012-2013)

The absence rate information set down below compares 2011/12 to 2012/13.

	Primary				Secondary			
	% Auth Absence	% Un/auth Absence	% Overall Absence	% PA	% Auth Absence	% Un/auth Absence	% Overall attendance	% PA
Southend 2011/12	3.8	0.7	95.4	4.3	4.1	1.6	94.2	7.1
Southend 2012/13	3.9	0.9	95.2	7.2	5.0	1.3	93.7	7.1

The overall absence rate for the Primary sector has stayed the same whereas the Secondary sector has fallen by 0.5%. There was an increase in the overall percentage of persistent absence from 4.3% to 7.2% in primary schools. Equally, in the Secondary sector there is an increase of 0.9% in the percentage of absence. The increase accounts for the unusually high level of norovirus sickness within schools for the autumn 2012/13.

6. Schools progress report

Ofsted categories for Southend schools December 2013

Primary	Secondary	Special	Overall	National	Ofsted category
11%	33%		15%	20%	Outstanding
53%	33%	80%	51%	58%	Good
33%	17%		26%	19%	Requires Improvement
3%	17%	20%	8%	3%	Inadequate

66% (35) of schools and academies in Southend-on-Sea LA are currently good or outstanding. 60% of pupils attend a good or outstanding primary school in Southend and 68% attend a good or outstanding secondary school.

6.2 Update on schools progress

In order for Southend to improve its schools' performance to securely above national and to increase the number of schools judged as good or outstanding, further challenge and intervention is required with a small number of schools. Details of these are provided to every People Scrutiny Committee cycle.

7. Corporate Implications

7.1 Contribution to the Council's Vision and Corporate Priorities.

This report provides evidence to show how Southend Council in partnership with Southend's early year's settings and schools is continuing to improve outcomes for all children and young people especially those who are vulnerable. It also enables Members to consider and evaluate the impact of early intervention to address vulnerability and underperformance in schools.

7.2 Financial Implications

The improvements evidenced in this report have been achieved through strengthening efficiency within the service areas, greater integration of intervention and improved targeting of resources.

7.3 Legal Implications

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to address underperformance and provide for vulnerable children in order to improve their outcomes. This report provides evidence of the extent to which these duties are being fulfilled.

7.4 People Implications

None

7.5 Property Implications

None

7.6 Consultation

Not applicable

7.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

All equality and diversity requirements are addressed in partnership with schools. The standards attained by pupils from different socio-economic groups are assessed and evaluated. The data is shared with schools to review the impact of interventions at LA and school level in order for appropriate steps to be taken to address future needs.

7.8 Risk Assessment

The key risks relate to quality and standards, i.e. that pupils' standards of achievement do not improve and that schools are not judged to be of sufficient quality to achieve a positive inspection outcome. The dual approaches of universal school risk management and targeted support and intervention for underperforming schools together with promoting school to school support underpin the Strategy and are proving to be effective in mitigating these risks.

7.9 Value for Money

The service operates at approximately 50% of its 2010 level whilst achieving improved results.

7.10 Community Safety Implications

Not applicable

7.11 Environmental Impact

None

8. Background Papers

The Southend Challenge, Southend's Revised School Improvement Strategy for 2013-2014

Schools Causing Concern, Guidance from the Department for Education (May 2013)

9. Appendices

The Southend Challenge, Southend's Revised School Improvement Strategy for 2013-2014