

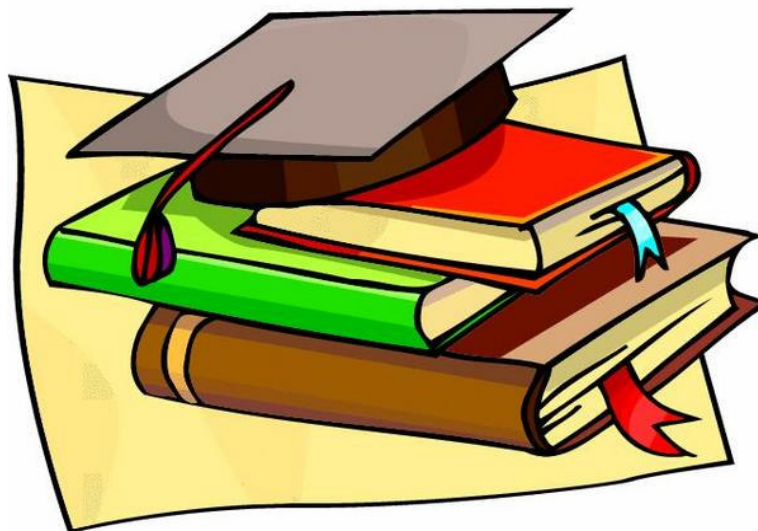
Overview and Scrutiny in Southend-on-Sea



Children & Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee

“RAISING THE ATTAINMENT OF PUPILS FROM DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES”

Final Report and Recommendations



July 2004

CONTENTS

Foreword	3
Scope, objectives and methodology	4
Main Issues for Scrutiny	6
Evidence/Findings of the Scrutiny	7
Discussion of the Evidence	7
• Key Concepts: Disadvantage, Community and Attainment	7
• Combating Negative Cultural Factors	8
• The Primary/Secondary Divide and Selection Procedure Issues	9
• Central Government Guidance & the Role of the LEA	10
• Good Practice in Southend Schools	11
Conclusions and Recommendations	12
Appendix 1: Evidence from Witness Sessions	15
Appendix 2: Preliminary Data	45

FOREWORD

Early in the municipal year 2003/4, the Council's Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee decided to undertake a scrutiny on the subject of "Raising the attainment of pupils from disadvantaged communities." The over-arching aim of the study was to examine what measures might be put in place to raise the educational attainment levels of pupils from disadvantaged communities.

We started the in-depth scrutiny project in November 2003, and the Committee held evidence-gathering sessions with key stakeholders between January and March 2004. We explored with them the effects of disadvantage on pupil attainment levels, and what positive measures could be taken to alleviate those effects and thereby improve attainment levels. We were pleased to note that schools in the Borough already take a pro-active approach to such problems, and that there are many examples of good practice which can be commended and shared with other schools.

The report makes four main recommendations incorporating twenty specific measures aimed at improving levels of attainment amongst disadvantaged pupils.

We would like to thank all those who have been involved in the in-depth scrutiny project, in particular those who took the time to attend meetings to give their evidence, and our colleagues on the Children & Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee, together with the officer Project Team.



Councillor Andrew Moring,
(Chairman, Children & Lifelong
Learning Scrutiny Committee)



Councillor Simon Gorham,
(Vice-Chairman, Children &
Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee)



Councillor Denis Garne,
(Member, Children & Lifelong
Learning Scrutiny Committee)



Councillor Carole Roast,
(Member, Children & Lifelong
Learning Scrutiny Committee)

Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee

2003/4 Project - "Raising the attainment of Pupils from Disadvantaged Communities"

1. SCOPE, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The Scope of the Scrutiny; Objectives and Outcomes

- 1.1 In the municipal year 2003/4, the Council's Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee decided to undertake a scrutiny on the subject of "Raising the attainment of pupils from disadvantaged communities." The over-arching aim of the study was to examine what measures might be put in place to raise the educational attainment levels of pupils from disadvantaged communities.
- 1.2 The objectives agreed by the Committee were:-
- To enable the headteachers and governing bodies of the schools in disadvantaged areas to inform Members of their views on the impact of disadvantage on pupil performance.
 - To inform Members of the Committee about the attainment levels of disadvantaged communities.
 - To compare the educational attainment levels of disadvantaged communities in Southend with the wider national situation.
 - To examine the reasons for any differences between the local and national situations.
 - To identify and examine measures which are already in place in Southend schools to improve the attainment levels of disadvantaged groups.
 - To identify and examine other measures which might be taken to improve the attainment levels of disadvantaged communities.
- 1.3 The outcomes sought from the study were identified as being:-
- To enable a greater appreciation of the situation between headteachers and Members.
 - To make appropriate recommendations to Southend schools and other stakeholders to improve the educational attainment of pupils from disadvantaged communities.
 - To identify good practice guidelines and commend them to schools in the Borough.

Methodology/Process

- 1.4 The scrutiny was carried out by the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee supported by an Officer Project Team comprising:-
- Geoff Smalley, Principal Committee Officer and Project Co-ordinator.
 - Terry Reynolds, Assistant Director of Education & Lifelong Learning
 - Ann Johnston, Advisor, Primary Phase
 - Alison Gellet, Information and Systems Manager
 - Denise Allen, Senior Secondary Advisor
 - Jo Bates, Admin Support Officer

A small Member group comprising the Chairman, (Councillor Andrew Moring) Vice-Chairman (Councillor Simon Gorham) and a representative from each of the other political groups on the Committee (Councillors Denis Garne and Carole Roast) was attached to the project team in order to give guidance and act as a consultative body during the course of the scrutiny. The project plan for the study was drawn up and approved by the Committee. The scrutiny commenced in November 2003 and ended with the formal approval of the final report in May 2004.

- 1.5 In order to prepare Members to undertake the scrutiny, an initial presentation was given to the Committee by members of the Officer Project Team. This provided an explanation of the key concepts under-pinning the scrutiny such as definitions of attainment, community and disadvantage. National and statistical data relating to pupil attainment was also provided and key points from such statistics highlighted (see Appendix 2).
- 1.6 Following the initial briefing, the Committee split into break-out groups in order to have a preliminary discussion of the key issues and to consider questions which they might wish to ask at the subsequent evidence-giving sessions.
- 1.7 The briefing material provided the necessary background information for four formal public evidence-giving sessions at which the Committee received oral, written and presentational evidence from a large number of key stakeholders. It was hoped that the information obtained from such stakeholders would enable a valid comparison to be made between the national picture provided in the briefing documents and the local situation.

Evidence Gathering

- 1.8 The Committee took oral and written evidence from representatives of Primary and Secondary headteachers in the Borough, Teacher Unions, Community and Pressure Groups operating in the field of the disadvantaged, both local and national, and relevant local authority and related agency officers. All the evidence was taken in public under Local Government Access to Information Rules. In addition to these formal public evidence sessions, Members of the committee accepted an invitation from the headteacher of Temple Sutton Primary School to undertake a site visit for the purpose of observing some of the initiatives which the school has taken in order to benefit pupils from disadvantaged communities.
- 1.9 The stakeholders involved in the oral/written evidence process are outlined in para 1.10 below. Witnesses were advised of the areas of potential questioning in good time for the meeting and, a few days before the meeting, a final list of questions was provided to witnesses to allow them time to formalise their answers. Stakeholders were given the opportunity to make an initial presentation on their work and its relationship with the subject matter of the scrutiny and to provide preliminary written answers to the pre-notified questions which could form the basis of a discussion with Members on the issues raised. At the Committee meeting, Officers took a note of the answers and any ensuing discussion. Following each meeting, a copy of the note of evidence was sent to the witnesses for comment on its factual accuracy prior to publication.

Stakeholders

- 1.10 The Committee received evidence from the following individuals representing the organisations indicated, to whom the Council is grateful :-

28 January 2004

Southend Association of Primary Heads (SOPHA)

Bron Lister-Smith, Headteacher, Richmond Avenue Primary School, Shoburyness.

Frank Gulley - Headteacher, Temple Sutton Primary School, Southend

Teachers' Unions

Jerry Glazier (National Union of Teachers)

2 March 2004

Essex Racial Equality Council
Clive Mardner, Director

Essex Traveller Education Service
Kanta Wild-Smith, South Area Manager

Milton Community Partnership
Mark Budner

Trinity Family Project
Nishma Shah (written evidence)

Child Poverty Action Group
Dr Paul Dornan (written evidence)

5 March 2004

Temple Sutton Primary School
On site observation

Frank Gulley - Headteacher

15 March 2004

Education and Lifelong Learning Department
Linda King, Service Manager, Social Inclusion
Michael Bracey, Head of Southend Youth & Connexions Service

Social Care Department (Corporate Parenting)
Meera Spillett, Assistant Director (written evidence)

30 March 2004

Southend Secondary Heads
Vicky Squirrell, Head Teacher, St Bernard's High School for Girls
David Mansfield, Head Teacher, Southend High School for Girls

2. MAIN ISSUES FOR SCRUTINY

2.1. The initial phase of the scrutiny exercise involved research into what might be considered to be the main issues in relation to the subject matter of the scrutiny at both national and regional levels. It was undertaken by means of a study of the briefing documents referred to at para 1.5 above. In addition to statistics indicating the national and regional picture, the documents and preliminary briefing session outlined a number of key themes or issues in relation to disadvantaged pupil attainment. In the context of the objectives and anticipated outcomes of the scrutiny, the **main issues** can be summarised as follows:-

- the complexity of the picture in relation to the attainment levels of ethnic groups;
- the consequent difficulty in devising a simple yet rigorous definition of "disadvantaged communities";
- the value of the national curriculum and associated national tests in providing a benchmark for the assessment of the attainment of pupils and schools;
- the use of free school meals (FSM) take-up as an indicator to enable Southend schools to be grouped for comparative attainment purposes in the context of disadvantage;
- the fact that FSM take-up is itself an indicator of family poverty; in conjunction with specific "cultural" factors such as a lack of parenting skills, a lack of positive parental or other educational role models, low level aspirations and negative peer-group pressures for example, poverty is the most likely determinant of disadvantage and, therefore, of the low educational attainment which often follows;

- the nature of the relationship between disadvantage and success in the selection procedure for secondary schools;
- the fact that, due to the difficulty of the transition to secondary school added to the effects of cultural differences between primary and secondary schools, vulnerable/disadvantaged children are at increased risk of low expectations and consequent low attainment.
- examples of good practice in some Southend schools which are demonstrably effective in raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils;

2.2 On the basis of the information in the briefing documents and the themes or issues outlined above, a number of preliminary questions were drafted in batches and sent to the various stakeholder groups prior to their attendance before the Committee. The subsequent responses from the various witness groups concerned indicated that there was a broad consensus on the issues which needed to be tackled, which were largely in line with those set out above, albeit that the perspective of the stakeholders on those issues and the suggested action needed might differ somewhat.

3. EVIDENCE/FINDINGS OF THE SCRUTINY

- 3.1 As indicated earlier in this report, whilst background knowledge and understanding of the issues was obtained from publicly available statistics, evidence of the situation on the ground in Southend was obtained via the four formal evidence-taking sessions with key stakeholders and the site visit to a school in the Borough.
- 3.2 A detailed record of general comments and specific responses to questions posed by Members of the Committee was prepared. This record of evidence was forwarded to a representative of each stakeholder group which contributed to the study in order to ensure that the recorded evidence was factually correct. A copy of the evidence for each witness session is attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 3.3 For the sake of brevity and to avoid unnecessary repetition, it was not considered necessary to further summarise the findings at this stage but rather to move directly to a discussion of the evidence prior to outlining conclusions and recommendations drawn from the study.

4. DISCUSSION OF THE EVIDENCE

- 4.1 The commentary below relates broadly to the main issues which emerged during the scrutiny set out in Chapter 2, which are themselves set out in the context of the objectives and anticipated outcomes of the scrutiny.

Key Concepts: Disadvantage, Community and Attainment

- 4.2 During the course of the scrutiny, professionals from a number of fields were asked to define disadvantage. There emerged a general consensus that disadvantage involves unequal access to opportunities and services which are widely available to the general populace and this can be experienced at an individual level involving both economic and social factors but also on a wider, community level; the key point is that a large range of factors such as family poverty, inadequate parenting, poor housing, low level aspirations and expectations and negative peer group pressures can combine in a variety of ways to create substantial barriers to learning by individuals and groups.
- 4.3 The conventional wisdom suggests that the term "disadvantaged communities" relates primarily to particular social groups. However, statistical evidence received by the Committee suggests a far from simple picture. To use one example, data on pupils from level 5 at Key Stage 3 indicates the following percentages from different ethnic groups achieving 5 plus A* - C at GCSE in 2002:-

White	49%
Indian	72%

Pakistani	67%
Bangladeshi	71%
Black Caribbean	48%
Black African	68%
Black other	49%
Chinese	70%

- 4.4 The GCSE attainment figures for 2000 paint a complex picture whereby Chinese, Indian, Bangladeshi, black African and Pakistani ethnic groups exhibit relatively high attainment as compared with white, black Caribbean and other black ethnic groups. Other statistical evidence suggests that ethnic and gender differences can exacerbate under-achievement, particular examples being white and black Caribbean boys. Gypsy travellers were described by Ofsted in 1999 as “the group most at risk within the education system”.
- 4.5 Given the complexity of the picture in relation to the attainment levels of ethnic groups and the consequent difficulty in devising a simple yet rigorous definition of “disadvantaged communities” , a more fruitful line of enquiry is to try and tease out some of the factors which tend to lead to low attainment and, conversely, to identify factors which lead to relatively high attainment levels in, for example, the Chinese and Indian communities.
- 4.6 Evidence throughout the scrutiny indicated that family poverty/low income is the primary cause of multiple disadvantage. Free school meals (FSM) take-up is an established indicator of family poverty in education circles and FSM take-up is also a useful indicator which enables Southend schools to be grouped for comparative attainment purposes in the context of disadvantage. There are ten such groups nationally ranging from schools having less than 5% FSM to schools having 50% or more FSM. Although, as poverty is the most likely determinant of disadvantage and, therefore, of the low educational attainment which often follows, nevertheless evidence from schools in the Borough which have taken a pro-active approach to combating disadvantage and low attainment and which have relatively high levels of FSM take-up suggests that the effects of disadvantage can be overcome with determination and the use of innovative practices.
- 4.7 For all their imperfections and inadequacies, the advent of national tests under the National Curriculum which promote continuity and coherence in education provide a benchmark by which the educational attainment of all pupils can be assessed at the end of each Key Stage. This is allied to a new emphasis on equality and inclusion whereby all children must be able to access the curriculum and have equal educational opportunities. Local statistics reveal results above the national average for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and show that brighter children are achieving well but that more children need to be brought up to nationally acceptable levels.

Combating Negative Cultural Factors

- 4.8 Mention has already been made of cultural factors which exacerbate the effects of family poverty in bringing about educational disadvantage. Some examples of such factors are listed below in three interacting categories:-

Family factors

- Dysfunctional families
- Inadequate parenting skills
- Low level aspirations
- Neglect/violence/abuse in the home
- Poor diet/nutrition
- Poor living and housing conditions
- Relocation because of social unrest or war
- Family mobility in the case of traveller children.

Local Community Factors

- Negative role models/peer group pressure
- Neighbour problems
- Exposure to the drug culture
- Crime
- Teenage pregnancy
- Racial discrimination/racial tensions

School Factors

- Poor attendance
- Poor behaviour
- Bullying
- Low self-esteem/confidence
- Special educational needs/disability

4.9 Whilst the above lists are by no means exhaustive, they do give an indication of the plethora of negative cultural factors which interact together to lessen the chances of many pupils from reaching their potential. Examples of specific initiatives which have been shown to be effective will be discussed later in the report (in particular at para 4.21). It is evident that some Southend schools and their Head Teachers have a coherent underlying philosophy and outlook which underpins specific measures which are undertaken to assist disadvantaged pupils. The framework adopted at Temple Sutton Primary School in particular is of interest as it provides the foundation for a raft of practical measures which have already been successful in raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. Key aspects of the philosophy are:-

- Compensation – the belief that the school should attempt to compensate disadvantaged pupils for their disadvantage providing, for example, a stable environment involving an opportunity to feel valued.
- High expectations – the need to combat the lack of suitable parental and other role models and low parental expectations allied to a poor familial tradition of academic achievement.
- Personalised learning involving individual adults working alongside each child to support them in a mentoring role.
- Celebration of individual children's achievements.

4.10 This underpinning set of values has led to changes in the organisation of the school and considerable progress has been made in reducing particular problems such as bullying/bad behaviour and in improving attainment levels. The vision for an extended school whereby a number of agencies such as the Housing Department, Local Health Trusts, the Social Care Team and the local Police are utilised and the school is extensively used by the whole community with, for example, further education for adults taking place in the evenings, has helped in improving the sense of ownership by the local community, in particular for those parents who perhaps previously might not have become involved in their child's education.

The Primary/Secondary Divide and Selection Procedure Issues

4.11 Without exception, witnesses expressed the view that early intervention is paramount if problems caused by disadvantage are to be adequately combated. Whilst this suggests that infant/junior schools should be particularly mindful of the need to combat the effects of disadvantage in order to ensure that attainment is not jeopardised, there was also clear evidence that, even if primary schools take adequate measures to assist disadvantaged pupils, there are nevertheless a number of additional risk factors in secondary schools. The most obvious of these is the simple difference in size of the two kinds of educational institutions which leads to a danger of "depersonalisation" and pupils getting "lost" in the system. However, Southend's Secondary Head Teachers showed a clear awareness of this problem and have taken a number of commendable measures to combat it.

- 4.12 A further problem lies in the susceptibility of disadvantaged pupils in particular to negative role models in their own peer group in the secondary sector, partly consequent upon what several participants referred to as the significant cultural difference between primary and secondary schools. This seems to exacerbate the ethnic/gender disparities referred to earlier, examples from the information in Appendix 2 being:
- The fact that girls make more progress than boys in English at all Key Stages.
 - White pupils eligible for FSM are one of the worst progressing groups at GCSE for every Key Stage 3 prior attainment level
 - Black Caribbean pupils make below average progress at all Key Stages.
 - Among boys, Chinese pupils progress most at all Key Stages.
- 4.13 In addition to the problems which occur at the crossover between primary and secondary education and those which are caused by cultural differences between the two sectors, the scrutiny also examined the possible relationship between disadvantage and success in the selection procedure for secondary schools. Southend has four traditional grammar schools (Southend High for Boys, Southend High for Girls, Westcliff High for Boys and Westcliff High for Girls) plus bi-lateral or partially selective schools (St Thomas More High School for Boys (Roman Catholic – 10% selective intake)), (St Bernard's High School for Girls (Roman Catholic – 25% selective intake)), and specialist colleges (Cecil Jones High School, Shoeburyness High School, Belfairs Community College and Prittlewell Technology College (each having a 10% selective intake based on aptitude in specific subjects)). The selective and partially selective schools participate in a consortium "11 plus" selection procedure.
- 4.14 Evidence heard during the scrutiny strongly suggested that disadvantage reduces the chances of pupils gaining equality of access to secondary school opportunities. Many primary schools in the Borough give specific preparation for the selection examination whilst ensuring that this is not to the detriment of broader educational needs. However, the lack of parental backup or support experienced by many disadvantaged children, together with a limited family income, prevents access to the private coaching for the selection test which is often utilised by those parents who can afford to pay for it. There are many examples of good practice in Southend schools which are aimed at improving the chances of children from disadvantaged backgrounds achieving success in their attainment at primary schools. On the assumption that secondary selection will remain for the foreseeable future, Members were particularly conscious of the desirability of providing a level playing field upon which disadvantaged pupils could access educational opportunities fairly with others.

Central Government Assistance and the Role of the LEA

- 4.15 Contributors to the study made the point that family poverty, which is the fundamental problem causing low attainment amongst disadvantaged pupils, is outside the control of both the school and the LEA. Consequently, the continued demonstration of the relationship between family poverty and low attainment is essential in order to maintain pressure on those Government departments responsible for such structural factors. Notwithstanding this, the national agenda emphasises both raising standards and making improvements to equality and inclusion. Southend LEA now has data to indicate that this is happening locally.
- 4.16 The role of the LEA is as follows:-
- to provide leadership and a framework for development/implementation of strategies;
 - to monitor, challenge and support schools;
 - the provision of specific services;
 - the development of a culture of inclusion.

- 4.17 Additional support for vulnerable pupils in schools is provided by the LEA in part via the Behaviour Support Team and the Pupil Referral Unit, four key workers having been in post since November 2003 to work specifically with vulnerable children. Support is also provided by Education Welfare Officers with a social inclusion brief and children in public care have a dedicated Welfare Officer and teacher to provide support with their school placement. In addition, the new admission criteria for Community Primary Schools puts children in public care in the top priority for admission for implementation in September 2004. This should ease the problems which a number of such children have experienced in gaining access to a school.
- 4.18 The LEA is one of the main vehicles for providing opportunities for teachers to meet colleagues from other schools for mutual support and to share good practice. Future developments for pupils with social difficulties are likely to be focused on the areas of mental health, the need to support parents/carers in accordance with recent anti-social behaviour legislation and giving increased support and assistance to schools with high levels of fixed term exclusions. Adequacy of preparation for the secondary selection test was raised both by participants and Members.
- 4.19 Whilst it was generally recognised that funding via the LEA to support statemented children is reasonable, schools would welcome additional help in the following areas:-
- Delegated funds based on need within the school budget formula for each year (based upon adequate Government funding)
 - Stable funding levels enabling head teachers to plan staffing levels over the longer term (recognised as not being possible in the present climate).
 - Increased funding delegated to schools to support low level statements for those children on School Action Star Plus.
 - Increased behavioural support for schools
 - Attached and enhanced Education Welfare Officers for each school cluster group, to help support schools and disperse problems before they reach crisis point, probably leading to consequent reduction in workloads for Social Care, Head Teachers and SENCOs.

Good Practice in Southend Schools

- 4.20 As mentioned earlier in this report, there are many examples of good practice in Southend schools which contribute greatly towards raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. One example of an underlying philosophy behind specific good practice measures is outlined at para 4.9. All participants emphasised, in addition to high quality teaching, the importance of early intervention as soon as a problem of disadvantage or low attainment has been identified. Specific support measures can then be put in place.
- 4.21 **Examples of good practice** in Southend schools include the following:-
- **Early intervention**, sometimes at the nursery school level, which benefits many children even as young as three by having their social problems addressed before they start more formal education.
 - Early intervention is assisted by **good planning by teachers** who also keep a watching brief for pupils who may experience difficulties/anxieties.
 - The establishment and use of **pastoral care teams** to provide support for disadvantaged children together with related initiatives for specific needs such as groups dealing with bereavement, separation/divorce, and whole family support.
 - **Other strategies** such as breakfast clubs for those who do not receive breakfast at home, chill-out clubs for those who are unable to cope for the entire lunchtime in the playground, the circle time discussion group, infant and junior school councils and homework clubs for those who lack good facilities at home.

- **Specific strategies for improving attainment** such as Teaching Assistants working with individual children and small groups, e.g. the Reading Recovery scheme.
- One-hour **literacy work sessions** for large groups, which enable the relevant teaching staff to work with small groups.
- The use of a **home visit** associated with a written **home/school agreement** or contract in order to set the tone of the future relationship with the school and improve/develop parental involvement.
- **Close working** between secondary schools and partner/feeder primary schools prior to the move to secondary school.
- **Pupil/parental interviews** prior to the move to a secondary school in order to highlight any problems.
- **Induction programmes** focused on easing the transition between primary and secondary schools.
- The **“buddy system”** for children arriving at a school later in the school year.
- The implementation of **anti-bullying policies** in schools.
- The use of **learning mentors/positive role models** from outside the education world.
- **Innovative ways of recruitment** to deal with the shortage of Special Needs Teachers, such as taking on graduate trainees.

4.22 Although the above initiatives are largely taken from a small number of schools whose Head Teachers participated directly in the study, participants stressed that many other schools are working in a similar way. The fundamental message from all concerned was that early intervention and an integrated, structured yet flexible whole-school approach are the key factors in providing the conditions in schools whereby the attainment levels of disadvantaged pupils can be raised. The objective evidence on the ground is that, with commitment, resilience and the right measures in place, much can be achieved, an example being Temple Sutton Primary School where, despite the fact that many of the children come from very disadvantaged backgrounds, the school's SAT results were some 10% above the national average.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 The principal outcomes sought from this study were

- To make appropriate recommendations to Southend schools and other stakeholders to improve the educational attainment of pupils from disadvantaged communities.
- To identify good practice guidelines and commend them to schools in the Borough.

5.2 Evidence throughout the scrutiny indicated that family poverty and/or low income is the primary cause of multiple disadvantage. Certain cultural factors exacerbate the effects of this in causing educational disadvantage and consequent low attainment. Disadvantage also reduces the chances of pupils gaining equality of access to secondary school opportunities.

5.3 The scrutiny brought to light many examples of good practice in Southend schools which contribute greatly towards raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. Accordingly, we make the following **recommendations** for consideration and adoption by those individuals and bodies indicated:-

Recommendation 1	Action by
That the underpinning framework of values set out at para.4.9 involving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compensation, • high expectations, • personalised learning, and 	Headteachers/ School Governing Bodies/SOPHA/ SOSHA

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • celebration be commended to all schools in the Borough. 	
---	--

Recommendation 2	Action by
<p>That consideration be given to the following enabling measures in support of schools:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Increased behavioural support for schools. (b) Attached and enhanced Education Welfare Officers for each school cluster group to help support schools and disperse problems before they reach crisis point. (c) The development of initiatives to encourage schools to adopt the good practice recommendations set out in this report. (d) Increased funding delegated to schools to support low level statements for those children on School Action Star Plus*. (e) The funding of 11plus test papers for all primary schools in the Borough, in order to give all pupils equal access to them. <p>*see note in Appendix 1, Witness Session 1, page 18</p>	<p>(a), (b) and (c) - Southend LEA (Executive Councillor for Education & Lifelong Learning/Director of Education & Lifelong Learning)</p> <p>(d), (e) – Schools Forum</p>

Recommendation 3	Action by
<p>That the following examples of good practice be commended for adoption as appropriate in all Southend schools:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Early intervention as soon as a problem of disadvantage or low attainment has been identified, sometimes at the nursery school level, which benefits many children even as young as three by having their social problems addressed before they start more formal education. (b) Good planning by teachers who also keep a watching brief for pupils who may experience difficulties/anxieties. (c) The establishment and use of pastoral care teams to provide support for disadvantaged children together with related initiatives for specific needs such as groups dealing with bereavement, separation/divorce, and whole family support. (d) Other strategies such as breakfast clubs for those who do not receive breakfast at home, chill-out clubs for those who are unable to cope for the entire lunchtime in the playground, the circle time discussion group, infant and junior school councils and homework clubs for those who lack good facilities at home. (e) Induction programmes focused on easing the transition between primary and secondary schools. (f) The “buddy system” for children arriving at a school later in the school year. (g) The implementation of anti-bullying policies in schools. 	<p>Headteachers/ School Governing Bodies/SOPHA/ SOSHA</p>

Recommendation 4	Action by
<p>That the following specific strategies and related measures for improving attainment be commended for adoption as appropriate by all Southend schools:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) one-to-one working by Teaching Assistants; (b) the Reading Recovery scheme; (c) one-hour literacy work sessions; (d) the use of a home visit associated with (e) a written home/school agreement or contract in order to set the tone of the future relationship with the school and improve/develop parental involvement. (f) close working between secondary schools and partner/feeder primary schools prior to the move to secondary school. (g) pupil/parental interviews prior to the move to a secondary school in order to highlight any problems. (h) The use of learning mentors/positive role models from outside the education world. (i) Innovative ways of recruitment to deal with the shortage of Special Needs Teachers, such as taking on graduate trainees. 	<p>Headteachers/ School Governing Bodies/SOPHA/ SOSHA</p>