

EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 9 JULY 2015

CLOSING THE GAP AT KEY STAGE 4

Report by the Director for Children's Services

Introduction

1. Education Scrutiny Committee has requested information about what steps are being taken to narrow the gap in achievement between that of vulnerable learners and all pupils.

All Pupils 2014

3. Pupils achieving 5+A*-C, including English and Mathematics, at GCSE in Oxfordshire was 59.4%. This is 2.6%pts above the national average.
4. The proportion of pupils making the expected level of progress in English KS2-KS4 in Oxfordshire is 74.0%. This is 2.2%pts above national.
5. The proportion of pupils making the expected level of progress in Mathematics KS2-KS4 in Oxfordshire is 71.1%. This is 5%pts above national.

Free School Meals (FSM)

% achieving 5+A*-C, including English and Mathematics		
	2013	2014
Cohort	538	503
Oxfordshire	30.3	28.0
National	38.1	33.7
Statistical Neighbour Average (SN)	31.9	28.4
Oxon ranking (SN)	8th	7 th

6. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for Free School Meals who have achieved 5+A*-C, including English and Mathematics, has decreased from 30.3% in 2013 to 28.0% in 2014.
7. Oxfordshire is ranked 7th out of Statistical Neighbours compared to 8th in 2013.
8. Oxfordshire is ranked joint 108th out of 152 LA's for FSM pupils attaining 5+A*-C, including English and Mathematics.
9. The gender gap for FSM pupils achieving 5+A*-C, including English and Mathematics, has narrowed in 2014 from 13.8%pts to 8.9%pts in 2014. The national and statistical neighbour gap is the same as in Oxfordshire.

FSM 5+A*-C, including English and Mathematics		
	Girls	Boys
	Gap	
Oxfordshire	32.9	24.0 → 8.9
Statistical Neighbours	32.9	24.0 → 8.9
National	38.2	29.3 → 8.9

10. In order to raise attainment for all groups and close the attainment gap for vulnerable groups:
- The commissioning boards for Early Years and Schools in Oxfordshire will build capacity to improve achievement, attendance and behaviour across Oxfordshire's school system. Members will contribute their collective expertise to a strategic improvement plan and monitor and steer improvement strategies.
 - The LA will be a champion for the child by placing children, young people and families at the centre of planning, and working with them to develop co-ordinated approaches to securing better outcomes. Best practice in Oxfordshire will be promoted to achieve equity and excellence to influence improvement. The LA will monitor settings, schools and partnerships, identifying underachievement or high levels of persistent absence and challenging them to improve. The LA will broker intervention and support to improve teaching and leadership and to improve the quality of teaching for pupils with special needs and special needs leadership, acting in partnership according to the requirements in the SEND Code of Practice. It is the LA's role to monitor gaps in provision, targeting and brokering additional provision for those that present the most challenges to learning.
 - Oxfordshire Teaching Schools Alliance (OTSA) will provide the best practice in Oxfordshire in achieving equity and excellence to influence improvement. They will provide training and brokered school-to-school support with a focus on using best practice in the county with high achievement for all groups of learners. OTSA will make use of recent local and national research to improve teaching and leadership.
 - School Leadership will develop equity and excellence as a cultural and professional imperative to deliver high standards of achievement for all individuals. They will develop resilience and self-improving structures that enable teachers to teach those that present even the most challenge in learning using best practice to influence others. They will work in partnership with other schools and professionals to improve provision for all vulnerable learners and to ensure access to education for all vulnerable children and young people without school places. They will use leadership of the SENCo and designated teacher so that they have significant influence in teaching children with SEND and who are in care.

11. As an LA we will:

- Share data about vulnerable pupils with schools and identify where there is a risk to performance through the annual risk assessment/position statement
- Ensure schools have access to partnership data and can see where schools address vulnerable pupils well.
- Complete our Aspiration Network project where partnerships of schools will evidence how they have worked to close the gap in achievement at a celebration event in July 2015.
- Work with the Access and Achievement Board to develop an up to date Vulnerable Learners Strategy.
- Work with the Access and Achievement Board to identify areas of concern and broker appropriate training and support using our strategic partners and working with school leaders who have been recognised for their success in closing the gap by the DfE.
- Follow the Academies Protocol where there are concerns about performance of vulnerable groups.
- Work with maintained schools to improve practice e.g. Fitzharrys, as part of the Abingdon partnership, has ensured that vulnerable learners have remained in their home school and have received appropriate provision for their needs. This ensures good attendance and learning at a pace that closes gaps in pupil attainment.
- Issue warning letters to schools following up section 8 monitoring reports with a focus on the achievement of vulnerable learners.

Financial and Staff Implications

12. The work outlined above is within existing allocations.

Equalities Implications

13. The work outlined above is designed to address equalities implications.

RECOMMENDATION

14. Education Scrutiny Committee is RECOMMENDED to support the Local Authority's focus on closing the achievement gap for vulnerable pupils.

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