

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION STANDARDS AND
INCLUSION****A STRATEGY FOR CLOSING THE EDUCATIONAL GAPS IN
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE****Purpose of the Report**

1. To present a summary of the impact of Nottinghamshire's Closing the Educational Gaps (CtG) Strategy.

Information and Advice**Context**

2. The CtG Strategy was approved by Full Council on 29 March 2012 and updated in autumn 2014 for the 2014-16 period. It sets out Nottinghamshire County Council's long term commitment to ensuring that the full range of services and partners work coherently with schools and other educational settings to maximise the impact of available resources in further improving the attainment and progress of vulnerable groups of learners.

Key actions and update on impact since the last report:

3. The key actions identified in the CtG Strategy, led by the **Education Improvement Service** and monitored termly by the **CtG Performance Board** continue to provide the focus of our collaborative working between all partners named within the Strategy.
4. Nottinghamshire's **Performance, Intelligence and Policy Team (PIP)** continues to produce a wide range of high quality CtG datasets in order to assess impact, identify areas of greatest need, areas for improvement and examples of good practice that can be shared and built upon at county, local and school level. Latest developments include a 'Profile on Entry' report which informs secondary schools of the prior attainment and characteristics of their incoming Year 7 pupils and details where gaps already exist. Secondary schools can use this to inform early intervention funded by the Pupil Premium and 'Catch Up' Premium. Also, a new performance handbook has been developed to support the work of the virtual school in identifying outcomes of looked after children to inform planning for improvements for future cohorts based on trends and gaps analyses.

5. The **2014 attainment data** for pupils who were eligible for free school meals at some point in the past six years (**FSM6**) shows that continued improvements have been made in terms of narrowing gaps as follows:
- in Early Years, 40.1% of FSM6 children achieved a good level of development compared to 37.9% in 2013 however the attainment gap widened from 22.7 to 26.3 percentage points due to the greater gains secured by Non FSM6 children in 2014
 - at Key Stage 2, validated data shows that the gap between FSM6 pupils achieving level 4 or above in combined reading, writing and mathematics against those not eligible has narrowed for the third year running. 66% of FSM6 pupils achieved this measure compared to 83.4% who were not FSM6, representing a gap of 17.4 percentage points. This is a 2.5 percentage point decrease from the 19.9 reported in 2013. In 2014 67% of FSM6 pupils nationally (1 percentage point more than Nottinghamshire) achieved this level compared with 83% (in-line with Nottinghamshire) of Non-FSM6 pupils. Nationally, the FSM6 gap stands at 16 percentage points which is just narrower than the Nottinghamshire gap of 17.4
 - at Key Stage 4, validated outcome indicators show that Nottinghamshire has reduced its gap to 28.9 percentage points when looking at first entries from 31.5 reported in 2013 for all entries. 35.5% of FSM6 pupils achieved 5+ A*-C grades including GCSE English and mathematics compared to 64.4% who were not FSM6. Nationally, the FSM6 gap for 2014 was 26 percentage points.
6. Analysis of **district level data** provides the following commentary:
- at KS2, validated data indicates that, with the exception of Broxtowe district which witnessed a slight widening of the gap (0.4 percentage points to 21.2%), all other districts narrowed the gap in comparison with 2013. Rushcliffe district witnessed the greatest decrease in the gap from 2013, a reduction of 3.8 percentage points to 13.8%
 - at KS4, validated data indicates that, with the exceptions of Broxtowe and Gedling, all other districts have narrowed the gap in comparison with 2013. Newark district secured the greatest decrease in the gap from 2013 with a reduction of 6.1 percentage points, closely followed by Bassetlaw with a reduction in the gap of 6 percentage points.
 - as a result of this evaluation, the 2015-16 service plan for the Support to Schools Service will include a focus on bespoke work to improve outcomes for vulnerable groups in the Broxtowe district.
7. Analysis of the 2014 attainment data for pupils with **Special Educational Needs (SEN)** shows that;
- at KS2, 35.6% of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) achieved level 4+ in reading, writing and mathematics compared to 89.1% who had no SEN. The SEN gap for the Local Authority is 53.5 percentage points which represents a narrowing of the gap compared to 57.2 percentage points reported in 2013. The national SEN gap for 2014 is 52 percentage points;

- at KS4, 23.6% of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) achieved 5+ A*-C, including English and mathematics, compared to 65.4% who had no SEN. The SEN gap for the Local Authority is 41.8 percentage points which represents a narrowing of the gap compared to 47.2 percentage points reported in 2013. The national SEN gap for 2014 is 45 percentage points.
8. Nottinghamshire's **Admissions Team** continues to work closely with schools through the school-led locality panels to secure school places for vulnerable children as part of Nottinghamshire's well-established Fair Access Protocol (FAP). The average waiting time for FAP cases in 2013-2014 was 29 days and the longest wait for a school place was 78 days. The autumn term figure for 2014-2015 is also 29 days, but the longest wait has reduced to 65 days.
 9. **Targeted Support and Youth Justice (TSYJ)** teams continue to work with vulnerable students who meet the thresholds for Early Help, Supporting Families or Youth Justice and for whom attendance is an issue. The rate of persistent absence has fallen in 2013-14 in comparison with 2012-13. Levels of NEET (16-18 year olds who are at risk of not being in education, employment or training) remain low in Nottinghamshire by comparison to the England, Regional and Statistical Neighbour averages.
 10. **The Early Years and Early Intervention Team** makes a strong and significant contribution to the CtG Strategy and is now working collaboratively with a range of partners to prepare for the roll-out of the Early Years Pupil Premium from April 2015. In terms of the promotion and support for take-up of early education places for eligible disadvantaged two year olds, the current figure of 62% uptake this term indicates that the team is on track to reach the annual target of 85%.
 11. Partnership working between **Nottinghamshire's Speech and Language Therapy Service (SLT)** and the Education Improvement Service (EIS) has successfully delivered two locality developments, one in Gedling and one in Newark:
 - the Gedling **"Talking to Learn"** collaboration, delivered across 15 schools (infants, juniors, primaries and one special), has secured improvements in provision for disadvantaged children with speech, language and communication needs. Involvement of local Children's Centres and Achievement and Equality team members has ensured 'joined-up' learning and working. The pilot outcomes have been shared at the spring term head teacher briefings and a final evaluation will be published in the summer term 2015. Many head teachers and a number of collaborations of schools from other areas of Nottinghamshire have already indicated an interest in using Pupil Premium funding to purchase commissioned SLT support for similar developments in their school/collaboration.
 - As part of the "Together for Newark" CtG collaboration, Nottinghamshire's SLT engaged a group of primary schools to deliver the national **"Communication Leaders"** pilot. Newark children have been included in national materials, the local "Switch Off and Talk" campaign and the launch of Nottinghamshire's new "Language for Life website". (www.nottslanguageforlife.co.uk)

12. The **Adult and Community Learning Service** has modified its targeting of resources to focus more sharply on improving provision and outcomes for disadvantaged learners and their families. The service has now changed the data used to target schools for Family Learning programmes so that those serving communities with the highest levels of deprivation in Nottinghamshire and at risk of significantly low attainment are the first priority. As a result, 27 new schools and Children's Centres have benefited from the programme in 2014-15.
13. The **'Together for Newark' (TfN)** locality collaboration is in its third year of development. Schools and local partners are now leading and funding the strategy for themselves as a result of the proven benefits of local collaboration on narrowing the gaps and improving the life chances for disadvantaged learners and their families. The TfN Steering Group, following external evaluation and the gathering of further views from within the local community, has now re-set the vision for the work of TfN during 2015-16. There is now a strong focus on early years' school readiness and securing economic well-being for 16-25 year olds in the town.
14. Building upon the success and learning from TfN a second locality collaboration is now being facilitated and co-ordinated by the Education Improvement Service. **'Together for Worksop' (TfW)** is well underway with schools, educational settings and wider partners within the town and outlying areas. The views of children, families and other stakeholders within the community have been gathered and evaluated to inform key strands of collaborative working focused on a range of strategies proven to further close educational attainment gaps and maximise pupils' engagement with and readiness for learning.

Other Options Considered

15. No other options were considered.

Reason for Recommendations

16. Latest impact data and external research evaluation indicates that the CtG Strategy is having a positive impact on narrowing the gaps for vulnerable and/or disadvantaged learners. There is secure evidence that cross service/phase collaborative working at County and locality level is supporting the development of new ways of working focused on earlier intervention to close gaps and ensure vulnerable learners meet their potential.

Statutory and Policy Implications

17. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the impact of Nottinghamshire's Closing the Educational Gaps Strategy is noted.

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Constitutional Comments

18. As this report is for noting only, no Constitutional Comments are required.

Financial Comments (SS 21/04/15)

19. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

A Strategy for Closing the Nottinghamshire Educational Gaps 2012-14

A Strategy for Closing the educational Gaps in Nottinghamshire – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 10 November 2014

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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