report

meeting	**GCSE Attainment and Deprivation Select Committee**
date	**20 April 2009** **agenda item number**

Report of the Chair of the GCSE Attainment and Deprivation Select Committee

Work Programme

Purpose of the report

1.   This report provides:

- information about the presentations by departmental officers who have been asked to attend to provide information requested by the members of the Select Committee

- Members with an opportunity to discuss the recent school visits.

Background

2.   The Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on October 13 2008 commissioned a select committee to examine GCSE attainment levels for pupils who are in receipt of free school meals. Free school meal rates give a broad indication of the level of deprivation among pupils attending a particular school. 13.9% of Nottinghamshire pupils in receipt of free school meals (FSM) achieved 5 A* to C passes at GCSE including english and maths compared with 45 % of pupils not in receipt of FSM for the academic year 2007. Nottinghamshire was ranked 130th out of a total of 148 local authorities.

3.   At the first meeting members of the Select Committee received a presentation from departmental officers which outlined the challenge of closing the performance gap for young people who are eligible for FSM. Nottingham County Council's strategic priorities including the raising of standards in core subjects, improving the quality of teaching, learning and curriculum provision were outlined. The need to share good practice; the support available for schools which have additional needs; the role of advanced skills teachers and the broadening of the range of curriculum pathways was discussed. The role of the National Challenge programme in improving schools performance and how contextual value added measures progress between key stages was also explained.

4. Members of the Select Committee received the 2008 GCSE and equivalent data at the second meeting on 9 February. This included a break down of FSM and non FSM performance for each school in Nottinghamshire, and the Contextual Value Added (CVA) scores between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 for each school. Members were also informed of the progress of the 13 schools identified in the National Challenge programme.

Further Evidence

5. Members have undertaken a number of school visits to discuss with practitioners working in schools how underachieving pupils are identified, and what additional support is available to these young people to improve their learning and attainment. Members will be sharing feedback from these visits and discussing the different initiatives used by schools.

6. Departmental officers from Children and Young People's Services will be attending the meeting to discuss the contribution the School Improvement Services makes to increasing the achievement of young people and improving the standards and performance of leadership and management in schools.

7. John Slater, Service Director – Learning and Achievement, and Colin Shepherd, Principal Data Analysis, Children and Young Peoples Services will be present to answer Members questions and discuss issues arising from evidence the Select Committee has received during the course of the review.

Future Work Programme

8. It is anticipated that the last meeting of the Select Committee will be 11 May. Members will be presented with a draft summary of the evidence gathered during the course of the review and its associated recommendations.

Recommendations

9. It is recommended that GCSE Attainment and Deprivation Select Committee:
   - consider issues raised by the discussion arising from the visits to schools
   - consider and ask questions about the information provided to the Select Committee and discuss any issues arising from the presentations
   - consider issues where the Select Committee may require additional information and agree any areas around the future work programme.

Councillor Yvonne Davidson
Chair of the GCSE Attainment and Deprivation Select Committee
Background papers: nil.