



meeting	GCSE Attainment and Deprivation	
date	15 December 2008	agenda item number

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

Scope and Work Programme

Purpose of the report

1. This report provides:
 - an introduction to the scope for the review and an opportunity for Members to consider the future work programme
 - information about the initial presentation by departmental officers which is intended to provide essential background detail Members will need for the review.

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.
3. 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. Nationally 21.1% of pupils on fsm achieved 5 A* to C passes (including English and maths) (Department of Children Schools and Families (DCSF) statistical first release January 2008) a version of the table is attached as Appendix 1.
4. A league table released by Save the Children as part of “End Child Poverty’s Keep the Promise Campaign”, 20 August 2008, indicated Nottinghamshire to be bottom with only 22% of children who receive free school meals achieving five good GCSE (A* to C) grades compared with 59% of children not in receipt free meals.

5. 5 A* to C GCSE passes including English and maths is the performance measure used by the DCSF in its Key Stage 4 Achievement and Attainment tables and the consequently the measure used by schools to work towards when improving standards. This data is now nearly a full year out of date and provisional KS4 results by free school meals group should be available in January. Based on interim data provided by schools there are expectations that the performance by pupils eligible for free school meals will have improved.
6. This review falls within Nottinghamshire's Local Area Agreement 2008 – 2011 priority of improving educational attainment and skill levels, specifically within National Indicator 78 a reduction in the number of schools where fewer than 30% of pupils achieve 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE and equivalent including GCSE and equivalent, including in English and maths.
7. The scope for the review, which is attached as Appendix 2 of this report, includes:
 - the reasons for the review
 - the objectives for the review.

Work Programme

8. Subject to Member agreement the Select Committee will meet on three occasions:
 - 15 December 2008 – 2 pm
 - 9 February 2008 – 2 pm
 - 9 March 2008 – 2 pm
 - In addition Members may wish to consider if they wish to undertake school visits.
9. John Slater, Service Director - Learning and Achievement Children and Young People's Services will attend the meeting to present Members with information about the GCSE attainment for pupils in receipt of free school meals and discuss the procedures that are currently used to improve attainment.
10. Colin Shepherd, Principal Officer Data Analysis, Children and Young Peoples Services will attend to answer questions and assist Members with the evidence gathering process.

Recommendations

11. It is recommended that GCSE Attainment and Deprivation Select Committee:
 - agree the scope

- consider if they wish to visit schools or would like to invite practitioners leading and managing improvements in attainment in schools to discuss the effectiveness of current systems
- consider and ask questions about the initial information provided to the Select Committee and discuss any issues arising from the presentation
- 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.