



HILLINGDON  
LONDON

## **SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATION FOR DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN**

### Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee Review Scoping Report 2015/16

#### **1. REVIEW OBJECTIVES**

##### **Aim and background to review**

At its November 2015 meeting, the Committee agreed to undertake a single meeting review to investigate how educational aspiration could be supported for disadvantaged children in order to improve attainment.

Government figures show that children from disadvantaged backgrounds are far less likely to get good GCSE results. For example, attainment figures published in January 2015 showed that nationally in 2013/2014, 33.5% of disadvantaged pupils achieved at least 5 A\*- C GCSEs (or equivalent) grades, including English and mathematics, compared to 60.5% of all other pupils, a difference of 27%.<sup>1</sup> Within Hillingdon, the 2015 figures show that 39% of pupils eligible for free school meals in the last six years achieved 5 A\*-C GCSEs (including English and Maths), compared to 64% of other pupils. This gives a gap of 25% in terms of outcomes at age 16 between disadvantaged young people and their non-disadvantaged peers. Whilst the attainment gap is greater at secondary level, evidence at national and local level highlights that disadvantage is a key indicator of academic success and educational opportunity at all phases.

The extent and persistence of attainment gaps is a focus of Government policy and is explored in a number of policy and research documents, including the 2013 OFSTED research report 'Unseen Children: Access and Achievement'.

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<sup>1</sup> Office for National Statistics, January 2015 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gcse-and-equivalent-attainment-by-pupil-characteristics-2014>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/unseen-children-access-and-achievement-20-years-on>

Whilst, taken as a whole, Hillingdon is not a deprived Borough, as highlighted in local strategic plans, including the Hillingdon Joint Health & Well-Being Plan 2014-17 and the Children & Families Trust Plan, there are areas of the Borough that have relatively high levels of deprivation.

The Department for Education's Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT version 5) indicates that the numbers of pupils in the Borough eligible for Free School Meals has increased each year for the past five years and now stands at 12,190 (an increase of approx 4000 children since 2010/11). By comparison, the number of children eligible for Free School Meals in neighbouring boroughs and across London has decreased in 2014/15. If, as current data suggests, Hillingdon has an increasing number of children considered to be disadvantaged and if 2014/15 outcomes for disadvantaged children at secondary level in Hillingdon show an overall decline in standards, it may be considered that the achievement and attainment of this particular group of children is likely to have an increasingly significant impact on overall standards of education in the Borough. Members are also asked to refer to the recent School Improvement Plan agreed by Cabinet.

## Terms of Reference

The following Terms of Reference are proposed:

1. To explore how the attainment of the most disadvantaged pupils in Hillingdon is affected and to investigate how this gap could be closed.
2. To investigate the measures that the Council, schools and other providers have in place to address the barriers to attainment, either caused by, or contributed to by disadvantage.
3. To consider evidence from officers, schools / teachers and other key stakeholders.
4. To review national research and evidence of good practice in other areas and to investigate how this is being applied in Hillingdon and what improvements can be made.
5. To investigate the promotion of Council and partner provided services and whether this could be increased or better targeted.
6. To consider whether the effectiveness of spending of Pupil Premium Funding could be improved.
7. To consider what the available data tells us about needs within the Borough and the identification of opportunities for further investigation.
8. To propose ways in which the Council could work effectively with schools and other partners to reduce the impact of disadvantage on educational attainment, within its School Improvement remit.

## 2. INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS

### **Strategic context**

#### The National Picture

Children and young people experience educational disadvantage as a result of many different and sometimes multiple, adverse circumstances and factors. There is no single definition of a 'disadvantaged' child. However, the definition of 'disadvantaged' currently used by the Government for allocation of the Pupil Premium and which is also used by OFSTED, is a pupil who is:

- Eligible for Free Schools Meals (FSM) in the last six years; or
- Looked after continuously for 1 day or more; or
- Adopted from care.

Therefore, as defined above, the largest group of children who are disadvantaged will be those from low-income families and will be those pupils categorised as eligible for Free School Meals at any point within the last six years.

As stated above, both at national and local level, educational attainment of disadvantaged children is significantly lower than that of other children. At a national level, attainment gaps have narrowed slightly in recent years. However, the attainment gap between pupils from low income families and those from wealthier backgrounds in the UK is one of the largest in OECD countries.

The 2015 annual HMI report ('Education, Children's Services & Skills') includes a specific focus on disadvantaged children and includes the following points:

- The performance of pupils and students from low-income backgrounds is the 'most troubling' weakness of the education system.
- The importance of achieving a good level of attainment in the early years before a child starts school.
- The attainment gap is a particular cause for concern at secondary level.
- Disadvantaged children suffer disproportionately where the quality of education is not good and where information and guidance on future pathways is poor.
- White British pupils continue to be the lowest performing of the larger ethnic groups.

The messages in the HMI report can also be found in many other reports. This includes a House of Commons Select Committee enquiry (June 2014), which describes the under-achievement of white working class boys and girls as being '...real and persistent.' The June 2013 OFSTED research report, 'Unseen Children: Access & Achievement', points out that progress on reducing under-achievement has been greater in larger cities and that, in areas of relative affluence, disadvantaged children can be 'unseen'.

## National Policy Background

The broader policy background was set out in the 2010-2015 Coalition Government policy on the education of disadvantaged children. Improving the educational attainment of and addressing barriers to disadvantaged pupils is included in targets set out in the Child Poverty Strategy 2014-2017. More recently, the Education Secretary, in a speech on the Pupil Premium (July 2015), referred to the Government's mission 'to ensure that every child, regardless of background, receives an education that equips them with the skills and knowledge that they need to succeed. That means extra support for the most disadvantaged...'

In Government policy, there is a focus on academies, expanding the number of free schools and intervention in 'failing' and 'coasting' schools as key planks of the strategy to drive school improvement and extend opportunities for children and young people.

A number of initiatives and funding streams are targeted towards disadvantaged children and young people, principally the Pupil Premium, which was first introduced in 2011. Other measures include free school meals, the fifteen hours free early education entitlement for the most disadvantaged two-year-olds and the 16-18 bursary scheme. Also of relevance, given its focus on school attendance and family support is the Troubled Families Programme and the LA's duty to raise participation of 16-18 year-olds.

Examples of relevant legislation and statutory guidance include:

- Children & Families Act 2013 - Places a duty on LAs to appoint a 'Virtual School Head' to promote the educational achievement of looked after children (section 99) and a duty on state-funded schools and academies to provide free meals for infant children (section 106).
- Childcare Act 2006 - Places a duty on LAs to secure early education provision free of charge.
- Statutory Guidance on Early Education & Childcare 2013 - LAs should promote access and inclusion and encourage take-up.
- There is a duty under Section 22(3A) of the Children Act 1989 to promote the educational achievement of looked after children.
- 'Promoting the Education of Looked After Children' - statutory guidance 2014.
- Statutory Guidance on the Role of the Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for Children's Services 2013 - 'LAs should work with partners to promote prevention and early intervention and offer early help... This will help to...narrow the gaps for the most disadvantaged.'

Closing attainment gaps is central to school improvement. The Hillingdon School Improvement Plan 2015-18 refers to the Council and school community working together to demonstrate 'that we are closing the gap rapidly for young people from our most vulnerable groups (including those who are disadvantaged...'. The OFSTED framework for inspection of local authority school improvement services states that one criterion used to decide whether to inspect is 'where pupils eligible for the pupil premium achieve less well than pupils not eligible for the pupil premium nationally'. Additionally and as a key element of risk assessment under the new common inspection framework, Ofsted uses the

analysis of gap data, alongside a range of other measures, to determine intervals between inspection and to confirm lines of enquiry.

### The Role of Schools & Other Providers

A research project undertaken by the National Foundation for Educational Research and commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE), 'Supporting the attainment of disadvantaged pupils: Articulating success and good practice' (November 2015) investigated the differences between schools in the performance of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. The study found that between one and two-thirds of the variance between schools in disadvantaged pupils' attainment could be explained by school-level characteristics. The study identified seven building blocks for success:

- An ethos of attainment for all pupils, rather than stereotyping disadvantaged pupils as a group with less potential to succeed.
- An individualised approach to addressing barriers to learning and emotional support, at an early stage, rather than providing access to generic support and focusing on pupils nearing their end-of-key-stage assessments.
- High quality teaching first rather than bolt-on strategies and activities outside school hours.
- A focus on outcomes for individual pupils, rather than on providing strategies.
- Deploying the best staff to support disadvantaged pupils; develop skills and roles of teachers and teaching assistants, rather than using additional staff who do not know the pupils well.
- Decisions to be based upon data and should respond to evidence, using frequent, rather than one-off assessment and decision points.
- Clear, responsive leadership: setting ever higher aspirations and devolving responsibility for raising attainment to all staff, rather than accepting low aspirations and variable performance.

Other sources of advice to schools on making best use of the Pupil Premium and supporting disadvantaged children include the Sutton Trust/Education Endowment Foundation toolkit.

In addition to educational measures, the extent to which school ethos and policies are inclusive can also have a direct bearing on disadvantaged pupils' access to education and later outcomes. The Children's Commission on Poverty report (2014) found that families struggle with educational costs, such as uniforms and materials. Advice to schools on legal requirements (e.g. charging policies) and good practice (e.g. school uniforms) is published by the DfE.

All schools receive additional funding from the Department of Education (DfE) to raise the attainment and improve the progress of children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. This funding, known as the Pupil Premium grant, can be used by schools in any way that they choose, but must show an impact on outcomes for children from the poorest backgrounds. Schools are held to account for the use of Pupil Premium grant funding by Ofsted through the new inspection framework and also through strong governance at individual school and Local Authority level.

During the last financial year, schools in Hillingdon received in the region of £8.5 million of Pupil Premium grant funding, which was used to support the attainment of more than 12,000 children. The DfE uses a measure called FSM Ever 6 to determine the number of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding. FSM Ever 6 uses eligibility for Free School Meals based on income as its primary indicator. In 2014/15, Pupil Premium funding was set at £1320 per eligible pupil in primary schools and £935 per eligible pupil in secondary schools.

The attainment profile of disadvantaged children in Hillingdon

The tables below show that the gap between the overall attainment of children eligible for pupil premium funding at the end of each Key Stage in 2014/15.

**Percentages of Average Point Score (APS) attainment and progress (using Contextual Value Added or CVA) for children with Pupil Premium 2014/15**

<b>2015 Pupil Premium KS1 (scores for Reading, Writing and Maths)</b>						
<b>A</b>	<b>Actual results (2014 results in brackets)</b>			<b>Pupil progress (CVA)</b>		
<b>Pupils</b>	<b>Average Point Score</b>	<b>% Level 2B+</b>	<b>% level 3+</b>	<b>Average Point Score</b>	<b>% level 2B+</b>	<b>% level 3+</b>
<b>FSM in last 6 years (995)</b>	15.3 (15)	61% (56%)	7% (7%)	0.2	3%	1%
<b>Not FSM in last 6 years (3087)</b>	16.7 (16.6)	76% (73%)	18% (16%)	0.4	4%	5%

<b>2015 Pupil Premium KS2 (scores for Reading, Writing and Maths)</b>						
<b>B</b>	<b>Actual results (2014 results in brackets)</b>			<b>Pupil progress (CVA)</b>		
<b>Pupils</b>	<b>Average Point Score</b>	<b>% level 4B+</b>	<b>% level 5+</b>	<b>Average Point Score</b>	<b>% level 4B+</b>	<b>% level 5+</b>
<b>FSM in last 6 years (996)</b>	27.4 (27.1)	60% (56%)	14% (14%)	0	0%	-2%
<b>Not FSM in last 6 years (2289)</b>	29.7 (29.8)	77% (76%)	32% (31%)	0.3	2%	2%
<b>2015 Pupil Premium KS4 (5 GCSEs A*-C inc English and Maths)</b>						
<b>C</b>	<b>Actual results (2014 results in brackets)</b>			<b>Pupil progress (CVA)</b>		
<b>Pupils</b>	<b>% 5+ A* - C inc Eng and Maths</b>	<b>Average point score Best 8</b>	<b>% EBacc**</b>	<b>% 5+ A* - C inc Eng and Maths</b>	<b>Average point score Best 8</b>	<b>% EBacc**</b>
<b>FSM in last 6 years (926)</b>	39% (38%)	274 (274)	16% (13%)	-6%	-11	0%
<b>Not FSM in last 6 years (2155)</b>	64% (67%)	334 (339)	30% (29%)	-3%	1	-1%

\*Average Point Scores are the total points achieved by pupils in their best 8 GCSEs (or equivalents).

\*\*English Baccalaureate

All are based on "New First Entry"

In Key Stages 1 and 2, percentages of attainment at the nationally expected levels of L2B and L4B respectively have improved for children eligible for Pupil Premium funding (FSMe6), although average point score attainment shows that a small overall gap remains between children from disadvantaged backgrounds and their non-disadvantaged peers. At the national level, Ofsted uses a comparison between the attainment of disadvantaged children in Hillingdon and other children nationally to highlight gaps. Using this measure, data for 2014/15 shows that overall outcomes for disadvantaged children are closing steadily at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, with the combined Reading, Writing and Maths



scores for disadvantaged children in Hillingdon improving at a faster rate than for disadvantaged children nationally. At Key Stage 1, the overall gap in attainment (L2B) has narrowed from 17% in 2013/14 to 15% in 2014/15. At Key Stage 2, the overall gap in attainment (L4B) has narrowed from 20% in 2013/14 to 17% in 2014/15. This demonstrates an overall improvement in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils across the primary sector in Hillingdon, although outcomes for these pupils still do not compare favourably with the national measures for all other pupils. Similarly, data shows that the average progress of disadvantaged children varies across schools in the Borough, which indicates that additional in-school factors affect outcomes.

Evidence from data shows that the progress of the most able disadvantaged children in Hillingdon in the primary sector is not yet as strong as the progress of similar children from non-disadvantaged backgrounds in Hillingdon or other children nationally.

At Key Stage 4, the overall attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and the peers has also closed in 2014/15. The gap using the 5 A\* - C, including the English and Maths measure, has closed from 29% in 2013/14 to 25% in 2014/15. However, analysis of data also indicates that progress within this measure has been less positive for disadvantaged pupils compared to their non-disadvantaged peers. This means that disadvantaged children have not made progress from their starting points in line with that of their non-disadvantaged peers. With the exception of entry for the English Baccalaureate, for which outcomes for disadvantaged children have risen in the Borough in 2014/15 compared to the previous year, all other secondary measures show a decline in the performance and progress of disadvantaged children, with the national LAIT (Local Authority Interactive Tool) highlighting an overall downward trend for disadvantaged children in secondary schools in Hillingdon.

More detailed analysis of gap data across the Borough suggests that two particular groups of disadvantaged pupils in Hillingdon are most prone to underperformance and, therefore, poorer educational outcomes than their peers: more able disadvantaged pupils and disadvantaged White British children. Evidence suggests that White British boys, in particular, are more likely to underachieve at Key Stage 2 and at secondary school in Hillingdon.

#### How are schools and the Council tackling disadvantage in Hillingdon?

Schools and Head Teachers have the autonomy to use their allocated Pupil Premium funding in any way that they feel most appropriate to raising the attainment of their disadvantaged cohorts. In many cases, schools use nationally available advice from the Sutton Trust and the Education Endowment Foundation to prioritise the use of this additional funding. Anecdotal feedback from across the Borough indicates that schools are currently using their funding primarily to provide interventions to boost learning and to tackle underachievement, to support programmes designed to raise aspiration for targeted

pupils and to work at a pastoral/family level with disadvantaged children who are displaying vulnerability to social exclusion. Some schools are also using proportions of this funding to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the whole-school.

The Council has placed outcomes for vulnerable children, including the disadvantaged, at the heart of its new Hillingdon School Improvement Plan. The School Improvement team uses risk assessment approaches, including the analysis of outcomes data for disadvantaged children to identify schools who may need intervention. In addition, in November 2015 the school improvement team worked in partnership with the Primary Head Teachers Forum in Hillingdon to deliver a working conference for primary Head Teachers, focusing on closing the gap for disadvantaged children. More recently, the Strategic Schools Partnership Board has agreed to support a cross-phase conference to tackle the underachievement of key groups. Support and training for governors regarding challenge on behalf of disadvantaged children should be available through partner organisations, including the Governor Support Service. Schools have raised concerns regarding the accurate identification of disadvantaged children. They have requested the support of the Council to ensure that information and funding received is correct and reflects the profile of the children that they have on roll. It is anticipated that the identification of eligible children, the examination of spend and its relation to best practice will be a key element of the review.

## **Responsibilities**

This review relates to the Council's Education Services and also to Children's Social Care, with regard to the educational attainment and aspiration of looked after children. The review will, by its very nature, focus on schools within the Borough. It will recognise that Hillingdon's schools are largely autonomous and independent organisations, with whom the Council seeks to work in partnership in order to raise the educational attainment of children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

This review falls within the remit of Cllr, David Simmonds, Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services.

## **Connected activity**

The findings of this review are likely to relate, in part, to findings of the recent major review on The Effectiveness of Early Help to Promote Positive Outcomes for Families. Care will be taken to ensure that the recommendations put forward by the two reviews do not unnecessarily duplicate each other.

## Further information

For their reference, Members may wish to review the following background information:

<http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN07061#fullreport>

The above paper provides a useful overview of information on disadvantaged pupils, the measures in place to improve their educational outcomes (e.g. the Pupil Premium) and the broader policy context.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-201415-education-and-skills>

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/education-committee/news/white-working-class-report/>

### **3. WITNESS EVIDENCE AND ASSESSMENT**

#### **Key information required**

It is proposed that some or all of the following information will be required to enable the Committee to undertake an effective review:

- Detailed profile of FSMe6 pupils at each phase.
- Internal Audit reports of Pupil Premium usage and spend.
- Associated team plans pertaining to the raising of attainment or achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- Gap data analysed according to school profiles.
- Data to enable comparison with other local authority areas.

#### **Lines of enquiry**

The following provide examples of some questions that Members may wish to ask Witnesses taking part in the review:

- How does your team prioritise outcomes for disadvantaged pupils?
- What kind of systems do you have in place to track the efficacy of interventions funded by the Pupil Premium?
- What kind of strategies do you use to raise the aspiration of disadvantaged young people and why have you chosen those strategies?
- What can the Council or its services do to support the attainment of children from disadvantaged backgrounds?
- What is working, in Hillingdon and across London, in schools where outcomes for disadvantaged young people are strongest?
- What are the greatest barriers for disadvantaged young people in Hillingdon's secondary schools?
- How are local post-16 and Higher Education providers working with schools to raise the aspiration of able and disadvantaged young people?

## 4. REVIEW PLANNING & ASSESSMENT

The table below sets out the possible witnesses that could be invited to present evidence to the Committee. It is proposed that this witness session is undertaken at the February 2016 meeting of the Committee. Members are reminded that this is not an exhaustive list and suggestions of additional or alternative witnesses made during consideration of this scoping report would be welcome.

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Proposed Officers / Witnesses</b>	<b>Purpose / Outcome</b>
13 January 2016	Agree Scoping Report	<p>Dan Kennedy ( Head of Business Performance, Policy &amp; Standards)</p> <p>Laurie Baker (Interim Head of School Improvement/Education Quality &amp; Strategy)</p> <p>Officer(s) to attend to answer Committee questions</p>	Information and analysis
17 February 2016	Witness Session	<p>School leaders - 1 x Primary HT representative - TBC</p> <p>1 x Secondary HT representative - TBC</p> <p>1 x Participation Key-worker / Early Intervention Team officer</p> <p>1 x Alternative Provision Provider representative</p> <p>1 x Primary Governor representative</p> <p>1 x Secondary Governor representative</p>	Evidence & enquiry

16 March 2016	Draft Final Report		Proposals – agree recommendations and final draft report
23 April 2016	Cabinet - Consider Final Report		Agree recommendations and final report
14 March 2017	Monitoring of implementation of recommendations	Officer(s) to attend to present update to Committee	Ensure that review recommendations are being effectively implemented

### Resource requirements

As is standard practice for a Policy Overview Committee review, once a report's recommendations have been agreed by the Cabinet, officers will be asked to begin delivering the necessary changes. The monitoring of officers' work is a fundamentally important aspect of the Committee's work and, as such, regular reports on progress can be requested by Members and a full update report will be added to the future work programme of the Committee. It is proposed that this update is brought to the Committee in March 2017, one year after agreement of the recommendations by the Committee

This review will be undertaken within current resources. Democratic Services will coordinate the review, with the support of Education Services and other Council departments / officers, as required e.g. Early Intervention Services.

The additional resource of staff time will be required to present, collect and format evidence for witness sessions will also need to be considered.