

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE: *Supporting Educational Aspiration for Disadvantaged Children*

Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor David Simmonds CBE
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Education and Children's Services
Officer Contact(s)	Nikki O'Halloran, Administration Directorate
Papers with report	Appendix A - Policy Overview Committee review - final report

1. HEADLINE INFORMATION

Summary	<p>To receive the Committee's review into Supporting Educational Aspiration for Disadvantaged Children.</p> <p>The Committee's report identifies a number of measures that it is anticipated will help to strengthen the work undertaken by schools working with the Council to promote greater educational attainment and progress by children from disadvantaged backgrounds living in the Borough.</p> <p>The Committee recognises the important role schools have to play in taking the lead to address gaps in educational progress and attainment across different pupil groups in the Borough. The Committee is recommending that officers work with schools to develop opportunities for greater joint working between schools. Opportunities to increase the take up of Pupil Premium Funding should be pursued to increase the resources available locally.</p> <p>Cabinet is requested to consider the Committee's findings.</p>
Putting our Residents First	This report supports the following Council objective of: <i>Our People</i> .
Financial Cost	There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Where resources have been identified, these are already within existing service budgets.
Relevant Policy Overview Committee	Children, Young People and Learning
Ward(s) affected	All

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet welcomes the report from the Children, Young People and Learning Policy Overview Committee on its review into Supporting Educational Aspiration for Disadvantaged Children and agrees the recommendations of the review, along with their implementation, as set out below:

- 1. That Cabinet endorses the existing work undertaken by the Council in relation to school improvement and the support provided to schools and families, while acknowledging the potential for this to be enhanced through greater school to school support.**
- 2. That the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services considers requesting officers to identify opportunities to further enhance partnership and collaborative working in order to:**
 - a. Consider how schools could be further assisted by school to school support to boost attendance of disadvantaged pupils.**
 - b. Consider how schools could support one another in relation to the recruitment and retention of staff.**
 - c. Identify whether schools can be further supported in their use of pupil premium funding and in the monitoring of the performance of pupils receiving pupil premium.**
 - d. Determine whether information can be provided to schools in order to ensure that schools are fully aware of which pupils are eligible for pupil premium.**
 - e. Explore the provision to schools of a directory of relevant services provided by the Council.**
 - f. Consider the strengthening of linkages between schools and Children's Centres in the Borough.**
- 3. That the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services considers requesting officers to analyse data to identify areas of the Borough where there are the largest number of disadvantaged children and for this and other relevant data to be reported back to the Committee for future consideration.**
- 4. That the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services recommends that the following areas be investigated further in light of the Committee's review:**
 - a. That the review of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) requested by the Committee as part of its previous review of Early Intervention Services be undertaken as soon as possible. It is further proposed that this be a joint review to involve the Children, Young People and Learning Policy Overview Committee, the External Services Scrutiny Committee and other bodies, if appropriate.**
 - b. That concerns raised in relation to the frequency with which some children and families are moved from one place of temporary accommodation be reviewed by officers and reported to the Cabinet Member as appropriate.**
 - c. That concerns with regard to the frequency of health checks for pupils and the availability of information relating to these be passed to officers in**

Public Health with a view to them raising these issues with the relevant bodies.

- d. Officers provide the Committee with an overview of the established links between schools and the business community, with a view to this being developed into a more comprehensive report or the subject of a future review. This would identify how the Council and its partners can help to support and strengthen existing joint working between schools and the business community and seek to identify new opportunities.**

Reasons for recommendations

To consider the report of the Children, Young People and Learning Policy Overview Committee and propose ways in which the Council, working with its partners, can support disadvantaged children in order to improve educational attainment.

It should be noted that following the Committee's review carried out earlier in the year, funding for education-related functions is being more constrained, in particular that available for local authority functions through the Education Services Grant which is expected to be abolished from September 2017. These recommendations should be considered in light of upcoming changes and, in particular, the role of schools in supporting educational attainment.

Alternative options considered / risk management

The Cabinet could decide to reject some or all of the Committee's recommendations, or pursue alternative routes in which to progress the objectives of the review.

3. INFORMATION

Supporting Information

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 funding, 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.

Government figures show that children from disadvantaged backgrounds are far less likely to get good GCSE results. Within Hillingdon, the 2015 exam results 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.

Closing attainment gaps is central to school improvement. The Hillingdon School Improvement Plan 2015-18 refers to the 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 broader policy background was set out in the 2010-2015 Coalition Government policy on the education of disadvantaged children. More recently, the Government has set out the 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...'

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 Local Authority's duty to raise participation.

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.

All schools receive additional funding from the Department for 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.

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.

Improving outcomes for vulnerable children, including the disadvantaged, are at the heart of Hillingdon's school-led, school improvement plan. Risk based assessment approaches, including the analysis of outcomes data for disadvantaged children to identify schools who may need intervention are used. In addition, in November 2015 the Primary Head Teachers Forum in Hillingdon delivered a working conference for primary Head Teachers, focusing on closing the gap for disadvantaged children. More recently, the Strategic Schools Partnership Board in Hillingdon 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 will be available through partner organisations, including the Governor Support Service. Schools have raised concerns regarding the accurate identification of disadvantaged children.

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, by its very nature, focuses on schools within the Borough. It recognises 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.

Cabinet Members' response

The Cabinet Member has considered the recommendations of the review and supports their implementation on the basis set out below:

Recommendation	Response
<p>1. That Cabinet endorses the existing work undertaken by the Council in relation to school improvement and the support provided to schools and families, while acknowledging the potential for this to be enhanced through greater school to school support.</p>	<p>Support - It is recognised that the Council has a role to play in challenging, and where appropriate, supporting schools to improve the outcomes for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Opportunities to develop school-to-school support to enhance the current arrangements should be explored.</p>

<p>2. That the Cabinet Member for Education and Children’s Services considers requesting officers to identify opportunities to further enhance partnership and collaborative working in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Consider how schools could be further assisted by school to school support to boost attendance of disadvantaged pupils. b. Consider how schools could support one another in relation to the recruitment and retention of staff. c. Identify whether schools can be further supported in their use of pupil premium funding and in the monitoring of the performance of pupils receiving pupil premium. d. Determine whether information can be provided to schools in order to ensure that schools are fully aware of which pupils are eligible for pupil premium. e. Explore the provision to schools of a directory of relevant services provided by the Council. f. Consider the strengthening of linkages between schools and Children's Centres in the Borough. 	<p>Support - There are opportunities to develop arrangements for schools to increase their support to other schools to help share experience, advice and ways to improve the educational outcomes for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. This should include the recruitment and retention of staff and how to increase the uptake of pupil premium funding by parents and carers to benefit pupils at the school. Providing information to schools about the services on offer from the council for disadvantaged children may assist schools in sign-posting families to appropriate information and advice, including children’s centres.</p>
<p>3. That the Cabinet Member for Education and Children’s Services considers requesting officers to analyse data to identify areas of the Borough where there are the largest number of disadvantaged children and for this and other relevant data to be reported back to the Committee for future consideration.</p>	<p>Support - A clear picture of the needs of disadvantaged children and where there are concentrations of need in the Borough will assist the Committee to target questions and challenge to those areas or groups of pupils which experience the greatest gaps.</p>
<p>4. That the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services recommends that the following areas be investigated further in light of the Committee's review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. That the review of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) requested by the Committee as part of its previous review of Early Intervention Services be undertaken as soon as possible. It is further proposed that this be a joint review to involve the Children, Young People and Learning 	<p>Support - The Committee has previously identified issues in relation to CAMHS and it is noted that it has been previously agreed to undertake a review. Bearing this in mind, there is no objection to a review being undertaken, subject to the Committee being in a position to fully assess the ongoing changes being made to the CAMHS Strategy.</p>

<p>Policy Overview Committee, the External Services Scrutiny Committee and other bodies, if appropriate.</p>	
<p>4. b. That concerns raised in relation to the frequency with which some children and families are moved from one place of temporary accommodation be reviewed by officers and reported to the Cabinet Member as appropriate.</p>	<p>Support - It is acknowledged that a high number of homeless presentations to the council are due to the loss of private rented accommodation and there are occasions where it is necessary to secure suitable, emergency, short-term accommodation. An update report will be provided to the Cabinet Member.</p>
<p>4. c. That concerns with regard to the frequency of health checks for pupils and the availability of information relating to these be passed to officers in Public Health with a view to them raising these issues with the relevant bodies.</p>	<p>Support - It is recognised that early identification of potential health issues will ensure that action is taken to improve health and wellbeing, which in turn provides for a strong basis for effective pupil learning and development. Concerns about the frequency of health checks will be passed to the Public Health Team to action with the relevant bodies.</p>
<p>4. d. Officers provide the Committee with an overview of the established links between schools and the business community, with a view to this being developed into a more comprehensive report or the subject of a future review. This would identify how the Council and its partners can help to support and strengthen existing joint working between schools and the business community and seek to identify new opportunities.</p>	<p>Support - It is recognised that building stronger links with the business community will help to develop new opportunities for Hillingdon's children and young people to develop skills and their experiences, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Providing the Committee with further information will support the development of these opportunities.</p>

Financial Implications

The recommendations set out in this report do not have any direct financial implications. Any additional work undertaken after agreement by the Cabinet would be met from within the existing resources available.

The recommendations do not create any additional budgetary pressures and primarily seek to ensure that the necessary policies, processes and procedures are effectively developed and embedded in order to maximise the effectiveness of services for disadvantaged children.

4. EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES

What will be the effect of the recommendation?

These recommendations, if approved by Cabinet, will help to strengthen the ways in which the Council and its partners can support disadvantaged children to improve educational attainment.

Consultation Carried Out or Required

The Committee sought a range of expert witness testimony as set out in Appendix B of its report.

5. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance has reviewed this report, confirming that there are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations outlined above. It is noted that funding for education-related functions is being more constrained, in particular that available for local authority functions through the Education Services Grant which is expected to be abolished from September 2017.

Legal

There are no legal issues arising out of the recommendations proposed at the outset of this report.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL.