

Responsible Officer

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Education Performance of Disadvantaged Children

1. Summary

- 1.1 Closing the gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and 'other' pupils is a priority for Shropshire and across the nation. Schools receive additional funding to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils through the Pupil Premium. Pupils' achievement consists of 2 elements: attainment and progress. Both elements are identified through performance measure that are specific to the phase or key stage of education.
- 1.2 In the Early Years Foundation Stage overall achievement is above national and statistical neighbour averages. The gap between the achievement of disadvantage pupils and other children measured against good levels of development is greater than the national gap.
- 1.3 In Key Stage 1 achievement is also above national and statistical neighbour averages and gaps between disadvantaged and other pupils are smaller than the national gaps.
- 1.4 At Key Stage 2 achievement remains above national and statistical neighbour averages. Gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their peers are narrowing but they remain wider than the national gaps. Gaps between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and their peers are broadly in line with national gaps (-1% to +1%).
- 1.5 Achievement at Key Stage 4 is just below national averages and below statistical neighbour averages. The gaps between

achievement of disadvantaged and other pupils have fluctuated over the period 2013 – 2015. Gaps in attainment have increased and are greater than the national average. The gap in progress has remained constant in mathematics and although wider than the national gap it is closer to the national figure than the gap in progress for English which has increased over the same period.

- 1.6 The report confirms the contextual issues that influence pupils' outcomes overall and especially for those who are disadvantaged. These factors include overall levels of achievement, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils within a school or LA cohort, the size of schools compared to the national average, the level of funding that schools receive and the ethnic backgrounds of disadvantaged pupils.

The report also identifies the range of actions and interventions undertaken to address the issues and close the gaps, especially at key stage 4.

2. Recommendations:

Scrutiny panel is asked to consider the information and comment.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

Not applicable

4. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications

5. Background

- 5.1 Improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils is a national education priority. Schools receive additional funding for disadvantaged pupils through the Pupil Premium and the impact of this funding should be monitored by Headteachers and governors. It is a central focus of the current Ofsted inspection framework. The performance of disadvantaged pupils is measured through comparison with the performance of non-disadvantaged (other) pupils nationally. Raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils remains a priority for Shropshire because over time the gaps between the achievement of

disadvantaged pupils and their peers has been wider than the national gaps, especially at the end of key stage 4.

- 5.2 Ofsted define disadvantaged pupils as those who are or who have been eligible for free school meals (FSM) at any point during the last six years, and those who have been looked after (CLA) continuously for six months. 2015 national performance data defines disadvantaged pupils as those who have been Eligible for Free Schools Meals (FSM) in the last six years, looked after continuously for 1 day or more; or adopted from care.
- 5.3 The educational performance of disadvantaged pupils focuses on two elements: attainment and progress. Attainment identifies the standards that pupils have reached and for 2015 and previous years it was measured against national curriculum levels and GCSE (or equivalent) grades. Progress identifies the improvement that pupils have made from their individual starting points and for 2015 and previous years it is and it is also measured against national curriculum levels. Both elements are important in evaluating achievement; progress is relatively more important than attainment in determining the effectiveness of provision and outcomes for pupils.
- 5.4 In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) overall achievement is above national averages and compares very favourably with Shropshire's regional and statistical neighbours. Attainment data (identifying good levels of development) confirms that Shropshire's gap was in line with the national gap in 2013 and 2014. 2015 data confirms the gap is 6 percent greater than the national gap because the attainment for disadvantaged children declined by 2 percent and the attainment of 'other' children improved by 4 percent. Overall attainment is 2 percent above the national average.
- 5.5 The Phonics screening check at the end of year 1 confirms that the gaps have narrowed over the period 2013 – 2015 and that it is 5 percent smaller than the national gap. In 2015 the attainment of disadvantaged pupils rose by 12 percent from the previous year.
- 5.6 Achievement at the end of key stage 1 for all pupils combined is also above national averages and compares favourably with regional and statistical neighbours. 2015 performance data confirms that the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their peers in reading remains 1 percent smaller than the national gap. In 2013 the gap was in line with the national gap. In writing the gap is 3 percent smaller than the national gap and in mathematics it is 1 percent smaller than the national gap. Over the period 2013 – 2015 none of these gaps have been greater than the national gap.
- 5.7 At the end of key stage 2 achievement for all pupils combined remains above national, regional and statistical neighbour averages. The gap in combined attainment across reading writing and mathematics has decreased by 4 percent over the period 2013 – 2015 but remains 3

percent greater than the national gap. The gap in attainment for English, grammar, punctuation and spelling has decreased by 9 percent over the same period. In 2013 the gap was 7 percent larger than the national figure and it has reduced to 2 percent greater than the national gap.

- 5.8 2015 performance data also confirms that the gaps between the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and their peers from the end of key stage 1 to the end of key stage 2 have continued to narrow. The progress gap for reading is 1 percent smaller than the national gap, the gap for writing is 1 percent larger than the national gap and the progress gap for mathematics is in line with the national gap.
- 5.9 The key indicator of attainment at the end of key stage 4 is the percentage of pupils who gain 5+ A*-C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics. Overall attainment is just below the national average and compares unfavourably with statistical neighbours. The gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils (using this measure) has fluctuated over the period 2013 – 2015 but overall it has increased by 5 percent. The gap is 8 percent greater than the national gap. It has increased because the attainment of disadvantaged pupils has declined.
- 5.10 Performance data also confirms over the period 2013 - 2015 the gap between the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and their peers in English from the end of key stage 2 to the end of key stage 4 has increased by 3 percent. The progress gap for English is 5 percent greater than the national gap.

Over the same period the gap between the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and their peers in mathematics from the end of key stage 2 to the end of key stage 4 has remained constant. In 2015 it exceeds the national gap by 2 percent. The progress gap for English is 5 percent greater than the national gap.

Contextual Factors that influence pupils achievement and gaps in performance of specific groups of pupils

- 5.11 It is important to understand the contextual factors that influence pupils' achievement and gaps in performance between disadvantaged and other pupils in order to close the gaps. These factors include the overall levels of achievement (attainment and progress), the proportion of disadvantaged pupils within a school or LA cohort, the size of schools compared to the national average, the level of funding that schools receive and the ethnic backgrounds of disadvantaged pupils.
- 5.12 Where overall attainment and progress is above national averages there is increased potential for gaps between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils to be greater than the national average. Overall attainment and progress across Early Years, key

stage 1 and key stage 2 are above national averages and the proportion of disadvantaged pupils in Shropshire is below the national average. This results in greater potential for gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers.

- 5.13 Shropshire also has a high proportion of primary and secondary schools that are smaller than the national average for each phase. 11 percent of primary schools have 50 or less pupils on roll and a further 25 percent of primary schools have 51 -100 pupils on roll. Many of these small schools are located over a wide geographical area. This restricts options for shared use of pupil premium funding and contributes to the diseconomies of scale: the relatively small amounts of funding received by small schools with small cohorts of disadvantaged pupils cannot easily be shared to support wider interventions and increased staffing. 15 of the 21 mainstream secondary schools are below national average size. The small size of Shropshire schools results in diseconomies of scale regarding funding and resourcing.
- 5.14 Funding for Shropshire schools in 2015 / 2016 remained in the lowest 1/3rd of LAs across the country (45th of 151). The gap between funding for Shropshire and the top 1/3rd funded LAs is substantial. Shropshire primary schools would have received 18 percent more funding if they were funded on the formula for Birmingham resulting in a further £15,500,000 pa across primary schools. Shropshire secondary schools and academies would have received 20 percent more funding if they were funded on the Birmingham formula resulting in a further £12,000,000 pa across secondary phase providers. Overall Shropshire schools and academies would have received £27,500,000 pa.
- 5.15 The ethnic background of disadvantaged pupils across Shropshire is predominantly White British. This profile is substantially different to urban and inner-city LAs where the ethnic background are substantially more diverse. The challenge of overcoming rural disadvantage in white British pupils is substantially different to tackling multicultural urban deprivation.

Actions undertaken to narrow and close the gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers

- 5.16 Thorough analysis of individual Early Years settings, primary and secondary schools is undertaken by the education improvement service to identify strengths and weaknesses in outcomes for pupils. Support and challenge is targeted through the Early Years Team and School Improvement Advisers to ensure leaders and teachers are addressing gaps in outcomes.
- 5.17 The Early Years Team have provided targeted professional development to improve the tracking of children's progress, and

interventions to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged children. The team is also working with Ofsted to provide further courses to confirm effective practice in closing gaps.

- 5.18 Attached school improvement advisers ensure robust challenge to Headteachers through school performance monitoring and the implementation of the Academies Protocol. The Primary and Secondary Central Policy Groups of Headteachers have considered the performance of disadvantaged pupils across the LA and the issue has been addressed at primary and secondary Headteacher briefings. Regular network meetings for subject leaders and secondary senior leaders have also focused on closing the gaps including the dissemination of leading practice from 2 secondary schools where the whole-school approach to literacy and promotion of reading has improved outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. 9 secondary schools were represented at the local Ofsted seminar on closing the gaps in January 2016 which also focused on whole-school literacy to make the curriculum accessible to disadvantaged pupils.

6. Additional Information

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

1. Analysis of the gaps between disadvantaged and other pupils in Shropshire schools 2013-2015
2. Presentation to the Central Policy Group of Headteachers on 14 January 2016 regarding gaps data

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

David Minnery

Local Member

All

Appendices

Appendix A – An analysis of the gaps between disadvantaged and other pupils in Shropshire schools 2013-15

Appendix B – presentation to CPG 14 January 2016