



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN ESSEX

A Report of a Review by a Task and Finish Group of
the People & Families Scrutiny Committee

September 2015



C O N T E N T S

FOREWORD	
By the Chairman of the Educational Attainment Task and Finish Group, Councillor Maggie McEwen	3
BACKGROUND	4
ISSUES EVIDENCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS	6
Key Evidence	6
Actions and Recommendations	12
SUMMARY OF THE EVIDENCE SESSIONS	14
Friday, 10 October 2014 – Thursday, 23 April 2015	14-43
Written Evidence	43
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	50
APPENDICES	52

FOREWORD

Priority number 1 in the Essex County Council Corporate Plan is: *Enabling every individual to achieve their ambition by supporting a world-class education and skills offer in the county.*

The rationale for this Task and Finish Group review, approved by the People and Families Scrutiny Committee is that there are areas in Essex where school performance at both primary and secondary schools is significantly below standard. The People and Families Scrutiny Committee agreed to scrutinise the performance in Essex schools, but wider, in the new school



world of Academies to look at the role of the Local Authority and how it can plan strategically if it has little or no control.

The Task and Finish Group attempted to identify the levels and trends in educational attainment in schools in Essex at each of the Key Stages; as well as evaluate how the levels of attainment compare nationally. Where underperformance exists the Group set out to identify the causes, and to identify and evaluate all options to address the causes of this. The Task and Finish Group also needed to understand the barriers to improving school performance; and to understand the reduced funding regime including the role of The Schools Forum. How School Governors can influence improving school performance was also a key tenet of the Task and Finish Groups remit. Finally, the Task and Finish Group would make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning to support improvement in educational attainment across the county, and these recommendations and actions are included within this report.

The recommendations and actions from the review are grouped around some key findings from the review, namely: the recruitment and retention of staff; early years; school governors; data; and the pupil premium and these are highlighted in this report.

I would like to acknowledge the valuable assistance to the review of all contributors both oral and written and also for their comments on this final report. All contributors to this review are acknowledged on pages 4 and 5 of this report.

I welcomed the opportunity to Chair this review and would wish to thank my fellow Task and Finish Group Members Councillor Susan Barker, Councillor Keith Bobbin, Richard Carson, and Councillor Ian Grundy for their diligent approach and professionalism during the course of this review.

I commend this scrutiny report to you.

COUNCILLOR MAGGIE McEWEN

Chairman of the Educational Attainment in Essex Task and Finish Group
County Councillor for Ongar and Rural

Background

Background to the Scrutiny

The People and Families Scrutiny Committee established a Task and Finish Group to review Educational Attainment in Essex in September 2014 following several iterations of the review scoping document (Appendix 1). It was agreed at the September 2014 meeting that the review would identify the levels and trends in educational attainment in schools in Essex at each Key Stage; evaluate how the levels of attainment compare nationally; identify the causes of underperformance and identify and evaluate all options to address the causes of underperformance; understand the barriers to improving school performance; understand the reduced funding regime; and identify how School Governors can influence improving performance. The Group would, ultimately, make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning to support improvement in educational attainment across the county.

The People and Families Scrutiny Committee confirmed the membership of the Task and Finish Group at its meeting on 4 September 2014. However, one of the Parent Governor representatives on the Committee subsequently withdrew his membership of the Task and Finish Group.

Membership

The Membership of the Task and Finish Group was agreed as:

Councillor Maggie McEwen (Chairman), Ongar and Rural
Councillor Susan Barker, Dunmow
Councillor Keith Bobbin, Pitsea
Richard Carson, Parent Governor non-elected representative
Councillor Ian Grundy, Stock (ex-officio)

Evidence base of the Scrutiny

Nine formal oral evidence sessions have been held where a range of contributors have been able to provide evidence to the Task and Finish Group. The contributors have been (Essex County Council unless stated):

- Five members of the Young Essex Assembly and Rhona Gilder, Community Engagement Officer
- Huw Jones, Senior Analyst
- Pippa Shukla, Lead Strategic Commissioner, Pupil and School Intelligence
- Shamsun Noor, Head of School Admissions and Transport
- Debbie Rogan, Executive Headteacher, The HEARTS Academy Trust
- Leanne Hedden, Governor, Shenfield High School and the Essex Schools' Forum
- Rod Lane, Governor, Great Bradfords Infant and Nursery School
- Sean Moriarty, Governor, St. Benedict's Roman Catholic College
- Linda Oliffe, Governor, South Green Junior School
- Councillor Ray Gooding, Cabinet Member for Education & Lifelong Learning

- Chris Kiernan, Interim Director of Commissioning, Education and Lifelong Learning
- Alison Fiala, Lead Commissioner, Primary Education
- Lyn Wright, Standards and Excellence Commissioner: Secondary Education
- Richard Thomas, Executive Director, Association of Secondary Headteachers in Essex (ASHE)
- Councillor Susan Barker, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environmental Services, Uttlesford District Council
- Councillor Graham Butland, Leader, Braintree District Council
- Councillor Terry Cutmore, Leader, Rochford District Council
- Councillor Peter Greig, Castle Point Borough Council
- Councillor Terri Sargent, Cabinet Member for Environment and Community, Basildon Borough Council
- Councillor Neville Watson, Castle Point Borough Council
- Andy Wright, Corporate Director, Braintree District Council
- Dr Tim Coulson, Regional Schools Commissioner for East of England and North-East London, Department for Education
- Ruth Bird, Chairman, Executive Committee of the Essex School Governors Association
- Russell Ayling, Executive Committee of the Essex School Governors Association
- Debbi Botham, Service Manager, Governor Services
- John Clarke, Executive Committee of the Essex School Governors Association
- John Hunter, Executive Committee of the Essex School Governors Association
- Joyce Sweeney, Executive Committee of the Essex School Governors Association
- Clare Kershaw, Head of Commissioning, Education and Lifelong Learning
- Councillor Giles Watling, Chairman Education and Skills Committee, Tendring District Council
- Keri Lawrence, Executive Projects Manager, Tendring District Council
- Malcolm Morley, Chief Executive, Harlow District Council
- Dr Mike Gogarty, Director of Commissioning, Healthy Lifestyles
- Jane Richards, Head of Commissioning Public Health and Wellbeing
- Mike Blant, Liaison Officer, Essex Primary Headteachers Association (EPHA)

Additionally, written representations were received from Stavroulla Yiannou, Head of Commissioning Education and Lifelong Learning; David Burch, Director of Policy, Essex Chambers of Commerce; Richard Holmes, Director of Customers and Community, Maldon District Council; Averil Price, Director of Community Services, Chelmsford City Council; And Dr Tim Coulson (see above). Members of the Task and Finish Group have also, so far, undertaken visits to Wickford Church of England Infant School, Briscoe Primary School, Pitsea and Shenfield High School. Other school visits are planned for early in the autumn term 2015.

The Task and Finish Group is content that it has received, to date, a range of views and received contributions from a number of key individuals and groups to fully review educational attainment in Essex. The contributions received are highlighted in the section below, which is presented together with recommendations for the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning from whom the Task and Finish Group invites a response.

Issues, Evidence and Recommendations

Key Evidence

The first meeting of the Task and Finish Group established the scope of the review and it was agreed the following should be tested as part of the review:

- Performance data on all schools in Essex
- An understanding of past and present arrangements for managing the whole school estate, and the influence of new buildings and facilities on educational attainment
- An understanding of any influence the County Council can bring to bear on Academies/Free Schools. How does the Council fund the continuing services?
- The role and influence of LA School Governors with regard to school improvement
- An understanding of the reduced funding regime
- An understanding of statutory requirements
- An understanding of partnership working in local education with District/Borough/City Councils
- An understanding of the Ofsted inspection regime
- How do schools spend the Pupil Premium they receive?

In order to test these areas the Task and Finish Group agreed it would need to:

- To identify the levels and trends in educational attainment in schools in Essex at each Key Stage
- To evaluate how the levels of attainment compare nationally
- Where underperformance exists, to identify the causes
- To identify and evaluate all options to address the causes of underperformance
- To understand the barriers to improving school performance
- To understand the reduced funding regime including the role of The Schools Forum
- To identify how School Governors can influence improving performance
- To make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning to support improvement in educational attainment across the county

By theme, the key evidence received at the Task and Finish Group sessions are outlined below:

Recruitment and Retention

Essex is a hard area to recruit teachers to in terms of both locality and subject. Subsequently there has been a significant increase in overseas teacher recruitment. The Task and Finish Group heard that between 10-20% of staff in Essex schools are 'imported' from overseas, with Canada and Ireland supplying many staff. There is 100 overseas staff being trained to go into schools in Colchester and Tendring. This is a reflection on a national system that is struggling in terms of recruitment. Last year 50,000 teachers nationally left teaching. The biggest wastage is in the first five years of teaching. Headteacher hours are increasing, with Primary Heads working, on average, 50-59 hours per week; and Secondary Heads working, on average, 59-64 hours per

week. There are 17 Teaching School Alliances in Essex more than any other county in the country. However, there are not enough applicants for training places.

In relation to recruiting to teach subject areas the Task and Finish Group heard there have been 97 jobs advertised for mathematics teachers this year. Two years ago Government data showed that there were not enough mathematicians in training to fill current vacancies. Schools have to exist within the funding envelope and recruitment of staff is problematic. In areas where there is a low level of higher education qualifications it is problematic to recruit teachers into programmes such as Train to Teach. Particular subject areas that are difficult to recruit to are: Mathematics, Physics, Design and Technology, and Religious Education. The Task and Finish Group heard that one of the problems with attainment is if the school is a category three or four school with *Ofsted* there comes with that a problem with recruiting staff; there are also recruitment issues for schools in seaside areas and on the London borders of Essex due to the London weighting allowance paid as a retainer.

With regard to unqualified staff it was reported to the Group on a site visit that they can bring other skills and experiences into the classroom and that they are supported by non-class based outstanding teachers and leaders who have performance management targets and accountability for children's outcomes. Although unqualified staff are employed short term it is always a route to qualified status and not a replacement for it.

Recruitment of teachers is a regional issue and some schools are now taking the opportunity to train their own teachers on the job. The DfE recognises that Academies are no panacea and that some schools have declined since leaving Local Authority control.

Recruitment and retention of staff in those schools which are seen to be failing is the most difficult; yet these are the very schools which require excellent qualified staff. The fluidity of staff within clusters or partnerships allows schools to share resources also. Excellent Headteachers create and motivate staff to stay. However, external support is often needed in supporting schools with a high turnover of staff. It was agreed to include a **RECOMMENDATION** on sharing of school employment resources.

RECOMMENDATION

Where staff shortages exist schools be encouraged to pool their resources and employ subject specialists to work for a cluster of schools.

Owner: Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning

Implementation Review Date: March 2016

Impact Review Date: September 2016

The Task and Finish Group heard that the recruitment of Headteachers is even more difficult. In deprived areas recruitment is even harder. Schools in the county spend thousands of pounds on recruitment. To assist with recruitment difficulties there are examples of schools providing housing on-site for new recruits.

Early Years

The Task and Finish Group learnt that a Quality and Development Team started to work with pre-school providers and schools with regard to Early Years from 1997. Since 2013 this work has started to reap rewards with a number of targeted interventions having been implemented to raise the quality of Early Years provision and improve *Ofsted* outcomes for the pre-schools within the Private, Voluntary and Independent sectors. The co-ordination of networking opportunities via Essex Learning Communities to promote effective transition and best-practice in early years, along with a robust Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) profile assessment moderation process has contributed to the improved Good Level of Development outcomes over the past three years from 2013, which positions Essex above the national average.

The Task and Finish Group heard the opinion that the biggest single factor to increase primary school attainment is investing in children prior to statutory school age with Early Years intervention. Until the issue of children meeting the necessary assessments when they join the school is addressed, schools, particularly in deprived areas will always be trying to catch-up with other schools. The only statutory assessment before children start school is the Progress Check for children between two and three years old, if they attend a pre-school. The EYFS statutory framework includes typical behaviours for children to demonstrate within developmental age bands. However, this is not an assessment tool. Some children are not 'school ready', particularly in deprived areas, therefore, schools should look to develop relationships with feeder nursery schools.

The Task and Finish Group were informed, on a site visit, early years' children go into Wickford Church of England Primary School from the age of two. In this way, those with speech difficulties are more likely to catch-up with their peers than they are if they join the school in the Reception year. Similarly, children who attend pre-school at two years of age are likely to be supported appropriately and interventions put in place to help develop the child's speech and language. The view was stated that more pre-schools should be attached to infant or primary schools. There should also be a qualified person in a nursery class to monitor the progress of the children; however, this does not always happen in Essex.

Early Years provision is often patchiest in areas of relative deprivation with poor communication links and infrastructure to allow parents/carers to access any provision available.

With regard to Sure Start Children's Centres the view was expressed that they have had very little impact on the achievement of young children from deprived backgrounds. However, Children's Centres in Essex are inspected by *Ofsted* in the same way as schools and early years providers are; and a range of data is scrutinised as part of the inspection process. Children's Centres in Essex are delivered under contract by three national children's charities, with contracts managed and monitored on a quarterly basis by ECCs commercial function, which requires data submission. Schools are sometimes told children have reached the early learning goals when they clearly have not and there is no moderation of judgement made as there is no statutory assessment for children prior to entry to school.

Children's Centres in Essex are developing projects in partnership with local schools to track identified cohorts of children, for example those that are eligible for Free Entitlement of Early Years and Children for 2 Year Olds (FEEE2). Early evidence suggests accessing Children's Centres services is having a positive impact on educational outcomes in Essex. However, the opinion was raised in Task and Finish Group sessions that the reverse is true with Children's Centres not having the impact they were designed for nationally. The opinion was also raised that it is difficult for individual officers at a Local Authority to have a handle on what is going on at the centres. The Local Authority does monitor Children's centres on a quarterly basis and they have compliance checks carried out. They are also visited a minimum of four times a year as part of the Annual Review process. Investment in Early Years is key to attainment throughout a child's education, and opinion was stated that pre-schools do not often have access to outside facilities, with this a reality for many young boys from underprivileged backgrounds who need to be able to access outdoors – with particular reference to white British boys being the single biggest underperforming group nationally. It was countered, however, that the vast majority of pre-schools do have access to outside facilities and that it is a statutory requirement of the EYFS framework that children should have daily access to outside experiences.

The Task and Finish Group had heard from a number of sources that many children are not school-ready when they start the Reception year. Good links between schools and pre-schools is certainly the most effective way of ensuring the smooth transition for children progressing into school and to develop a professional and respectful relationship between staff to support children and their individual needs. Much of the nursery provision linked to schools takes children aged as young as two and there is clear evidence across the country that indigenous white working-class children are performing poorly including in early literacy. Dr Tim Coulson stated he is keen on nursery provision being linked to schools to tackle early literacy issues.

Dr Coulson's views echoed those heard on the site visits to Wickford Church of England Infant School and Briscoe Primary School as well as at the Task and Finish Group meeting with the Schools Forum members. It was agreed that the Final Report of the Task and Finish Group would include a **RECOMMENDATION** about linking Early Years provision with Infant/Primary schools.

RECOMMENDATION

The County Council should consider how best to link Early Years provision with Infant/Primary Schools in order to create a seamless transition from pre-school; and to prevent the discrepancies that have been reported to the Group with regard to the attainment levels of some EYFS children entering school. The Task and Finish Group heard conclusive evidence that linking provision would have a decisive impact on the literacy and numeracy skills of children. This would have a particular impact upon children from deprived backgrounds

Owner: Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning

Implementation Review Date: March 2016

Impact Review Date: September 2016

School Governors

Cllr Barker queried what governors do to assist in achievement? The Task and Finish Group heard Shenfield High School which was previously rated by *Ofsted* as “requires Improvement” is now rated as “Good”, and crucial to this is having the right governance structures with governors recruited who exhibit a range of skills and expertise. These governors should then be actively involved in the school by attending meetings and conducting monitoring visits that look at something within the school improvement plan.

The Task and Finish Group agreed to formulate a **RECOMMENDATION** that the County Council should think of ways to encourage employers in Essex to enable governors to be released from their employment to enable their contribution and commitment to schools be increased.

RECOMMENDATION

The County Council should consider ways to encourage employers to enable governors to be released from their employment to increase their contribution and commitment to schools

Owner: Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning

Implementation Review Date: March 2016

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Maintained schools have to reconstitute and look at the make-up of their governing bodies by September 2015. Instead of community governors there will be co-opted governors. Therefore, this opens up the opportunity for governing bodies to find people with the necessary skills rather than be people from the community.

Governors who come from business backgrounds are more able to keep up-to-date with training and have the commitment to do this. The training available from County ensures that professional people view the training as professional personal development. Parent Governors are much less likely to take-up training opportunities. The Parent Governor issue might be solved through the reconstitution of governing bodies in September 2015. ESGA is working with governing bodies to ensure a maximum of two-four Parent Governors.

Some Academies are attempting to move to having no parental or staff representation on governing bodies; and looking to business expertise only. However, there is nothing wrong with having a different range of expertise on a school governing body. When he was Education Secretary Michael Gove stated there should be paid School Governors. Some Governors are in schools three or four times a week; however, the opinion was this was too much. Every school is different but the pressures are practically the same, and these pressures put many potential Governors off. There is an absolute need that people in authority should have a system of joined-up support and thinking to action the one aim of improving the educational attainment of children. If you challenge, as a School Governor, you can get answers.

The Essex School Governors Association (ESGA) answered unequivocally no when asked whether School Governors should receive a retainer? However, there are examples of Governors being paid by the sponsors of Academies.

School Governors play an important role in raising school attainment. The relationship between the Headteacher and the Chair of School Governors is vital to ensure attainment levels are raised. The challenges made of the Headteacher at governing body meetings should all be minuted. It is crucial that School Governors see the school as a business, and with the correct governance Governors can be the critical friend and the challenge to the school and the senior leadership team. Therefore, it is crucial that governing bodies have the right committees, sub-committees and effective terms of reference. Governors also have a role to play in ensuring the health and wellbeing of senior leadership teams. Good governance is crucial in ensuring Governors are part of the leadership of the school. Ofsted can recommend a review of school governance structures.

Different schools and different governing bodies have different strengths and weaknesses; this should enable greater collaboration and support between governing bodies. It was agreed that a **RECOMMENDATION** be included in the Final Report of the Task and Finish Group to suggest more collaboration between governing bodies.

RECOMMENDATION

There should be encouragement and incentives for school governing bodies to work collaboratively with other governing bodies to ensure best-practice is shared throughout the county

Owner: Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning

Implementation Review Date: March 2016

Impact Review Date: September 2016

Data

Essex has data-sharing agreements through the National Pupil Database and has been praised by *Ofsted* for its post-16 data-sharing agreements. The Task and Finish Group has concluded that data gathering is a key to success and was impressed to hear how information is gathered, by schools, on how every child is performing with early baselines established to allow for intervention when necessary. Data drives up standards when the senior leadership team of a school uses the data to assess individual student progress.

The Task and Finish Group were particularly impressed by the data 'war room' established by Shenfield High School which tracks the achievements of all students in Years 10 to 13, enabling the school to make interventions if students are not achieving the levels they should be. Although primarily for staff the 'war room' is also used as a motivational tool for students from time-to-time.

From next year Progress 8 and Attainment 8 standards will be used to measure students. This new measurement aims to erase the false divide between those who achieve a 'C' grade and those who do not. Progress 8 will show how students' progress

against eight curriculum areas. However, the concern was raised to the Task and Finish Group that if a student, for example, does not have strong literacy skills and subsequently does not take a Humanities subject it will appear that the school is not achieving.

Essex is, by-and-large, in the third quartile on the key metrics. The Task and Finish Group heard the aim is to move the county into the top quartile. Historically at KS2 and KS4 Essex has only increased at the same pace as the national average; and this places the county in the lower end of second quartile or into the third quartile. However, if outcomes were increased for students in these two Key Stages at a rate higher than the national average this would place Essex firmly in the second quartile. The Task and Finish Group agreed to formulate a **RECOMMENDATION** stating that the County Council should commit to the indicator that the People in Essex have aspirations and achieve their ambitions through education, training and lifelong learning.

RECOMMENDATION

The County Council should commit to interim and ultimate targets to move to the express aim of being in the top quartile of educational achievement in the county at all Key Stages. It should also set the ambition that the improvements already seen in Essex in the secondary sector are matched in the primary sector

Owner: Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning

Implementation Review Date: March 2016

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Two years ago, Essex, in line with what occurred nationally, had higher results in Mathematics than in English at KS4. Now, schools have focused so significantly on their English outcomes over the last two years that this has had an effect on Mathematics attainment. Therefore, Mathematics continues to be a significant challenge. There is a scarcity of good Mathematics teachers and there has been recruitment from overseas to plug the gaps. And a new GCSE curriculum is about to be introduced, which will be harder than the present one. One positive intervention, the Task and Finish Group heard about, on Mathematics is at Tendring Technology College, which is developing a curriculum in partnership with local primary schools from KS1 all the way through schooling. This should help pupils cope with the Year 6 to Year 7 break, which had always proved challenging.

The Pupil Premium

The Pupil Premium is used creatively across the county, the Task and Finish Group heard. Indeed, the Young Essex Assembly suggested it could be used to fund extra-curricular and revision clubs.

The Pupil Premium enables schools to release staff from classrooms so they can spend time with children who are less able. It enables schools to be, effectively, over-resourced in terms of teaching. Schools also look for innovative ways of utilising the Pupil Premium, for example, the Task and Finish Group were informed that St. Benedict's Catholic College encourages engagement with the parents/carers of Pupil Premium students. The

school initiated a credit for Pupil Premium students which is worth £100 a term which they can use for music tuition, uniform, school trips etc. which is linked to attendance and reduces in scale if a student is absent from school. This initiative has proven to be successful.

On a site visit the Group heard the introduction of the Pupil Premium really has improved the educational attainment of the children. The very high level of Pupil Premium pays for uniform (including PE kit and shoes) for some children, and it also pays for a wide range of activities. There are over 20 after- or pre-school clubs, which are all free to children at the school. This has had a huge impact and is used skilfully, targeting the most needy children. The Pupil Premium has enabled the school to do more.

The Task and Finish Group would wish to see more creative and proactive use of the Pupil Premium and agreed to formulate a **RECOMMENDATION** as such.

RECOMMENDATION

The County Council should encourage all schools under Local Authority control to proactively and creatively make full use of the Pupil Premium to develop ways of improving the attainment of children from more deprived backgrounds

Owner: Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning

Implementation Review Date: March 2016

Impact Review Date: September 2016

Actions and Recommendations

The Task and Finish Group has agreed its actions and recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning and seeks the formal approval of the People and Families Scrutiny Committee to file these recommendations to the Cabinet Member at its September 2015 meeting. The recommendations are outlined below and are also highlighted within the document itself. In the event that the Cabinet Member does not accept any of the recommendations below, the Committee should be advised, in each case, the reasons for rejection in writing.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Where staff shortages exist schools be encouraged to pool their resources and employ subject specialists to work for a cluster of schools.
2. The County Council should consider how best to link Early Years provision with Infant/Primary Schools in order to create a seamless transition from pre-school; and to prevent the discrepancies that have been reported to the Group with regard to the attainment levels of some EYFS children entering school. The Task and Finish Group heard conclusive evidence that linking provision would have a decisive impact on the literacy and numeracy skills of children. This would have a particular impact upon children from deprived backgrounds.

3. The County Council should consider ways to encourage employers to enable governors to be released from their employment to increase their contribution and commitment to schools.
4. There should be encouragement and incentives for school governing bodies to work collaboratively with other governing bodies to ensure best-practice is shared throughout the county.
5. The County Council should commit to interim and ultimate targets to move to the express aim of being in the top quartile of educational achievement in the county at all Key Stages. It should also set the ambition that the improvements already seen in Essex in the secondary sector are matched in the primary sector.
6. The County Council should encourage all schools under Local Authority control to proactively and creatively make full use of the Pupil Premium to develop ways of improving the attainment of children from more deprived backgrounds.

ACTIONS:

1. The Task and Finish Group invites a response from the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning with regard to the influx of migrant children into Essex and the subsequent impact this has on class sizes in the county.
2. The Task and Finish Group would wish future Educational Attainment in Essex Annual Reports to provide detailed information to afford more clarity where improvements have been made.
3. The Task and Finish Group would wish the Cabinet Member to report if, and how, the County Council is working with the public sector to work with hard-to-reach groups to raise educational engagement and attainment.
4. More work is needed to understand the nature, level, and location of teacher recruitment and retention issues throughout Essex..

Summary of the Evidence Sessions and Site Visits

Friday, 10 October 2014

The membership and Chairmanship of the Task and Finish Group were established and personal interests in terms of school governorships were declared. The scoping document which had previously been presented to the full Committee was considered and discussed. Although outside the scope of the review it was agreed that the influence Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) has on educational attainment should be considered. The effect admissions criteria have on attainment was also added to the scope, particularly in relation to Academies acting as their own admissions authority. The Task and Finish Group agreed that the latest available performance data be requested in detailed form relating to both Local Authority maintained schools and Academies.

The role of The Schools Forum was discussed in relation to the impact it has on the funding regime and the recommendations it makes to the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning. The nature and scope of the recommendations from The Schools

Forum was questioned, and it was agreed to invite members of the Forum to a future meeting of the Task and Finish Group.

It was agreed the correlation between poor educational attainment and socio-economic deprivation be discussed with Borough/City/District Councils. Other issues potentially affecting the review such as the School Estates Strategy; the influence the Local Authority is able to exert over Academies; and Further Education Colleges was discussed.

Monday, 13 October 2014

As part of European Local Democracy Week the Task and Finish Group held a session with the Young Essex Assembly (YEA) starting at 5.30 p.m. – a time convenient for the five members of the YEA who provided their contribution to the review.

In advance of the meeting the Group had set 15 questions for the YEA which it had considered at a Sub-Group meeting on 20 September. Their responses are outlined below.

1. How effective has your education been in making you ready for work?

Although some schools give guidance on careers and “working for life”, more is needed - not only guidance about job-based skills but also things like mortgages. Cllr Grundy noted that the T&F Group on Financial Inclusion recommended that money matters should be included. It was agreed overall that there should be more and that schools should be more consistent in supplying it.

2. Does school size have any effect on education attainment?

Yes, it has a negative effect in several ways – bigger classrooms mean less quality teaching time and teacher’s attention for individuals. It also impacts on things like punctuality and attitude. Add to that mixed classes are not good, as pupils can feel worried about letting others down, if they make it apparent that they do not understand things.

3. In your experience is the transition between primary and secondary effective?

This can vary quite a lot. It can vary with the schools concerned and who you go with as well. Secondary schools will often do “fun stuff” with visiting pupils – but that is not what it will be like at all in Year 7. In reality, both primary and secondary schools need to be more focused in how they approach this transition for their pupils.

4. How far are young people involved in school improvement plans?

Several views were expressed. One YEA member was unsure if the school was committed at all; another pointed out that providing feedback at their school was a long process. Another suggested that the plans should concentrate more on the social and extra-curricular side of things; another suggested it should be made more child-friendly.

5. What are your views on teaching and learning strategies?

The emphasis is on teaching staff to be able to model their style according to the pupils they are teaching, and to liaise with each other about this. The size of the school may have a direct bearing on this. Relating to the use of laptops, schools have a supply for pupils' use, and pupils have their own accounts; but they cannot use their own laptops or tablets. There is some use of smartphones.

6. In your view, how important are extra curriculum activities in raising attainment?

These can raise happiness levels, develop life and social skills – including teamwork in some cases – which in turn all give rise to more motivation and academic achievement. These should be entirely voluntary and preferably free, so that nobody is prevented from participation on grounds of cost. One suggestion was to use Pupil Premium to fund extra-curricular and revision clubs. Transport was raised as a specific problem, in that sometimes buses and trains beyond school hours were limited.

7. Do your schools offer extra revision classes during summer and half terms?

Some do – they are a very good idea, but they should be free, and they should be conducted by the school staff themselves, rather than outsiders who are not known to the individual pupils involved.

8. Does your school help and encourage what you wish to do after school? Does your school raise aspiration to join a university?

This depends on the school. There seems to be more emphasis on university in independent schools. More advice/guidance on this topic is needed for all

9. Who, in your view, are the most important people in influencing your educational attainment levels?

Teachers have the most influence, in providing the drive to achieve in pupils. The attitude of parents is also very important and this varies a lot. Some are very supportive, whereas others do nothing and then blame the children. It was pointed out that parents are usually less able to give practical assistance with homework, the older the children get.

10. What are the key influences on educational attainment and aspiration?

Rewards of some kind were suggested as key to attainment. These can take different forms, e.g. trips or electronic credits. Another form of "reward" was noted – when badly behaved pupils received some kind of reward to encourage them to behave better – e.g. a position of responsibility. This could have quite a negative effect on those who were well behaved.

11. What interventions might tackle issues of low educational attainment in certain communities?

This was not seen as major problem, but it might be possible to bring in teachers from outside, to explore different ways of learning. It was seen more of an issue with individuals rather than communities.

12. Research commonly shows that girls have higher educational aspirations than boys. Is this your experience; and what can be done to close this gap?

In general terms, this was not seen to be the case by the YEA members. It is an individual thing and not gender related. However, there are some areas where this may apply. There are certain subjects that show a difference – for example, boys seem to be more motivated in science classes. Also, boys do seem to develop slower than girls. Another element is classroom behaviour – girls tend to speak up more than boys. With regard to segregated classes, these may benefit girls more, as they tend to get on with their work, but, again, it was seen as more being related to individuals' performances.

13. Do school league tables have an adverse effect on the attainment of young people where the pass-rates at GCSE are lower than average, can it become a self-fulfilling prophecy?

The YEA members had no real overall view on this issue. This can be the case with some people, but not all. Some look entirely to their own achievements. It is also possible that it will impact on teachers, in their own view of their abilities, but probably not to any great extent. The Chairman pointed out that such results are not actually yours, but of your predecessors.

14. Does peer pressure have an effect on educational attainment, either positively or negatively?

Peer pressure certainly can be influential, but it can pull pupils either way. The friendship group is very important to almost every pupil, and it can also lead to labelling of groups of friends – such as “geeks” for instance. This can sometimes be negative, especially for those on the edge of the group.

15. How important is a school's pastoral policies in terms of educational attainment?

The pastoral element is very important, as it cuts across several areas, eg academic, social, friendships groups, etc. Different members had different experiences, with some having the Heads of Year taking on these roles, and others having pastoral managers who move with groups as they progressed through the years. The latter can provide stability and build up relationships with pupils. There is a big difference when pupils enter Sixth Form, where they are treated more like adults and expected to take on more responsibility for themselves.

Friday, 19 December 2014

The Task and Finish Group were presented with the key priorities in the ECC corporate priority: People have aspirations and achieve their ambitions through education, training and lifelong learning and that the three priorities within this that Education Services are measure themselves against are:

- Every child in Essex to go to a good or outstanding school by 2018
- The gap in outcomes for vulnerable children to be closed
- Educational performance at Early Years, KS2 and KS4 to be in the top 25% of Local Authorities nationally

Attainment data was also presented to the Task and Finish Group. The Group heard that data is collected on Academies as well as maintained schools, there being a data-sharing agreement with Academies on school level attainment data. Through the National Pupil Database Essex Education have details of all children educated in Essex schools and have specific data-sharing agreements with bordering authorities, for example Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock Unitary Authorities. Essex has been praised for its post-16 data-sharing agreements in the *Ofsted* Annual Report.

The Task and Finish Group learnt that a Quality and Development Team started to work with pre-school providers and schools with regard to Early Years in 2011 and 2012 and this work has started to reap rewards. This intervention has led to an improvement in Early Years outcomes in the county.

At Key Stage 2 there are manifold measures used to assess performance but there is a standard that every child should achieve a level 4 at the end of KS2. In the last two years Essex has improved, but is still in the second quartile nationally.

At Key Stage 4 the standard measure is five GCSEs at Grades A*-C, including English and Mathematics. From this year there is a different measure in place. Schools are no longer able to include the best result of those students who had been entered early for a GCSE and then re-sit during May/June – schools now have to include the result from the ‘first sitting’ only towards their performance data. This has meant that many schools have stopped the early sit of exams. Equivalencies have also been excluded from the performance measurements, consequently the national scores have gone down this year.

In terms of Ofsted outcomes the last year has shown an increase in the number of primary, secondary and special schools being rated as either good or outstanding. This is an increase of 12% from 2012 for primary schools; and 16% for secondary schools. One of the prime foci of Ofsted at present is the improvement of educational outcomes of children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Primary and Secondary School Improvement Advisors RAG rank schools to see which of them require support throughout the following year and what level of support they might require.

Monday, 26 January 2015

The Task and Finish Group received contributions from Members of the Essex Schools Forum. The contributors were School Governors and an infant school Headteacher. The Task and Finish Group also received a verbal response to a question raised at a previous meeting as to whether the county policy on school transport might have an effect on educational attainment. It was explained from September 2015 for new starters the policy of the County Council is to provide free transport to the child’s nearest school if

the school is above the statutory walking distance. Catchment area schools are no longer a relevant factor in this. It was stated that attainment should not be affected by this policy. Low income families will be protected and this is clearly spelt out in the school application process. A view from other contributors to the session was that school transport policies do have an impact upon attainment.

The Task and Finish Group learned the Schools Forum makes recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning; and makes decisions on other issues, for example the Forum is looking to reduce the spend on high-needs residential special schools outside of the county. The Schools Forum looks at the most pressing cases in relation to reduced funding. There are three blocks of funding which the Forum looks at: Early Years, High Needs and Schools.

The Task and Finish Group were informed about inspirational and energetic school leadership which can have a positive effect on a school. The group were given examples of schools where this had been the case in Clacton and Basildon. For example, improvements to Felmores Primary School have been as a result of leadership which shifted the culture within the school. Previously the culture was that the children being, largely, from deprived areas would not achieve. Alongside this, the school is part of Basildon Education Services Trust (BEST) and in the early days of this initiative learning mentors were appointed from the 'pot' of BEST monies. In 2010/11 the BEST funding was devolved to schools and this also coincided with the school having a new Headteacher. The monies were able to be diverted to teaching and learning. Since this the students have increasingly, over the last four years, narrowed the gap with their peers in terms of their progress. The Task and Finish Group heard the opinion that the biggest single factor to increase primary school attainment is investing in children prior to statutory school age with Early Years intervention. No children entering Felmores Primary meet the necessary assessments when they join the school, and until this is addressed the school will always be trying to catch-up with other schools. Therefore, schools should look to develop relationships with feeder nursery schools.

Schools have to exist within the funding envelope and recruitment of staff is problematic. In areas where there is a low level of higher education qualifications it is problematic to recruit teachers into programmes such as Train to Teach. Particular subject areas that are difficult to recruit to are: Mathematics, Physics, Design and Technology, and Religious Education. The Task and Finish Group heard that one of the problems with attainment is if the school is a category three or four school with *Ofsted* there comes with that a problem with recruiting staff; there are also recruitment issues for schools in seaside areas and on the London borders of Essex due to the London weighting allowance paid as a retainer.

With further reference to Early Years the Task and Finish Group were informed that early years children go into Wickford Church of England Primary School from the age of two. In this way, those with speech difficulties are more likely to catch-up with their peers than they are if they join the school in the Reception year. The view was stated that more pre-schools should be attached to infant or primary schools. There should also be a qualified person in a nursery class to monitor the progress of the children; however, this does not happen in Essex. With regard to Sure Start/Children's Centres the view was expressed that they have had very little impact on the achievement of young children from deprived backgrounds. The provision has little incentive with no statutory obligation to provide

data. The provision does have SLAs attached to them; however, there is no moderation when children start school as, very often, the schools are told the children have reached their early learning goals, when they clearly have not. Anecdotal evidence suggests that children would be coming into schools with higher levels of attainment if Sure Start/Children's Centres were working. However, the reverse is true and they are not having the impact they were designed for. This is the national picture not just in Essex. It is difficult for individual officers at a Local Authority to have a handle on what is going on at the centres. It was queried whether Essex County Council prioritises Early Years and what ECCs strategic direction is related to Early Years. Investment in Early Years is key to attainment throughout a child's education it was stated; and pre-schools do not often have access to outside facilities, and this is the reality for many young boys from underprivileged backgrounds who need to be able to access outdoors – this is with particular reference to white British boys being the single biggest underperforming group in the country.

The Task and Finish Group heard that schools located in areas of deprivation that have spare places become vulnerable schools. Thus, this has an impact upon attainment levels. High turbulence within a school also impacts upon attainment due to the effect it has on the school managing the curriculum, teaching, and on staff.

Cllr Barker queried what governors do to assist in achievement? The Task and Finish Group heard Shenfield High School which was previously rated by *Ofsted* as "requires Improvement" is now rated as "Good", and crucial to this is having the right governance structures with governors recruited who exhibit a range of skills and expertise. These governors should then be actively involved in the school by attending meetings and conducting monitoring visits that look at something within the school improvement plan. A group of governors meet with the Headteacher once a month and look at the emerging data across all key stages. As a result governors have a greater understanding of the data than was the case two or three years ago and, as a result, are able to actively challenge the data and challenge school improvement plans. Governors have moved away from a subject-based approach and have some concentration on the pupil premium, safeguarding as well as school attendance and attainment monitoring. It was agreed that this approach would also work well in primary schools. The advent of a Free School in Brentwood has had an impact on admissions at Shenfield High School; and with another Free School opening from September 2015 admission numbers may be affected further. Shenfield High School is currently a four-form entry school; whereas, in the past, it has been an eight-form entry institution. Leanne informed the Group that Shenfield High School has a higher than average, for the area, number of children with special educational needs and this affects appropriate intervention for other students. It costs, on average, £10,000 per annum for an alternative education provision for a student.

In relation to the roles and responsibilities of a school governor, it was stated that governors should be knowledgeable and fully committed to the school. The last *Ofsted* report of St. Benedict's Catholic College said "the Governors are able to provide support to the management team at the school". Therefore, if governors have time to devote to the school during the school day to support the school leadership team this would be a positive move in to ensure good governance. The Task and Finish Group agreed to formulate a **RECOMMENDATION** that the County Council should think of ways to

encourage employers in Essex to enable governors to be released from their employment to enable their contribution and commitment to schools be increased.

The Pupil Premium enables schools to release staff from classrooms so they can spend time with children who are less able. It enables schools to be, effectively, over-resourced in terms of teaching. Schools also look for innovative ways of utilising the Pupil Premium, for example, the Task and Finish Group were informed that St. Benedict's Catholic College encourages engagement with the parents/carers of Pupil Premium students. The school initiated a credit for Pupil Premium students which is worth £100 a term which they can use for music tuition, uniform, school trips etc. which is linked to attendance and reduces in scale if a student is absent from school. This initiative has proven to be successful.

Groups of schools making each other progress and being accountable for each other is better than raising attainment school-by-school, it was stated. There is no mechanism that looks at how groups of schools can make each other better. It was suggested that it would be fascinating to see how this could be done in Colchester as every year the Grammar Schools are lauded by the local press with little or no coverage of the other schools in the Borough. There was support from the contributors of having schools under an 'umbrella' as it enables sharing of teaching and resources. The Local Delivery Groups have money but not the resources, and some schools don't buy into them and use their own resources.

Thursday, 26 February 2015

Site Visit to Wickford Church of England School, Mount Road, Wickford SS11 8HE

Present:

Debbie Rogan – Executive Headteacher

Louise Johnson – Head of School

Lee Faris, Early Years Manager

Steve Clark – Business Manager

- Part of HEARTS Academy, which now has four schools: Wickford Church of England School (2010); Briscoe Primary School, Pitsea (2011); Waterman Primary School and Stambridge Primary School (both 2015) in Rochford
- The Trust has three directors: Julia Attridge, Michael Maguire and Tim Elbourne (Member of the Chelmsford Diocesan Education Trust)
- The school is rated as Outstanding by both *Ofsted* and Inspector of Church Schools. It is a national support school and a teaching school
- Additional Funding comes from selling services to others
- The Trust makes strategic decisions on HR, finance and financial monitoring, but relies on local governing bodies to make local decisions. The Trust selects the Governing Body.
- There are six teachers at the school.

A question was posed as to whether having only six teachers affects what the school can do with regard to the amount of outreach? Debbie responded that sometimes classes

come together. With planning it is ensured the children are not disadvantaged in any way. The school uses a number of specialist teachers, brought in to teach particular skills, and shares staff with other members of the Trust. Leaders also have accountability for targets and achievement and despite the expectation that they will do school to school support and manage this their main priority is ensuring that they focus on children staying on track with high quality teaching at all times.

It was asked whether the school can identify anything that affects the children's educational attainment? Debbie replied the context the children find themselves in. Recruitment is an issue in Basildon, and there are three unqualified teachers at Briscoe Primary School one of whom is on the 12-week assessment route to achieving Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) as well as salaried routes into teaching.

As a supplementary it was asked whether there are issues arising from having unqualified teaching staff? It was answered that unqualified staff can bring other skills and experiences into the classroom and that they are supported by non-class based outstanding teachers and leaders who have performance management targets and accountability for children's outcomes. Although unqualified staff are employed short term it is always as a route to qualified status and not a replacement for it.

A question was raised whether when recruiting the school looks for specialisms? The school often looks at Teaching Assistants with a degree. The school has staff to assist in training classroom management. Standards are maintained by the senior teachers making up the level that inexperienced teachers could not do. Research has shown that the level of care and pre-school education that children receive on a school site is greater than that of a nursery outside a school setting. Therefore, the school can prioritise vulnerable children.

With regard to funding it was asked what the impact of the imminent increase in National Insurance and Pension contributions might be? Steve responded that this will put a lot of pressure on budgets. Across the country contributions will be rising from 14% to 16.5%. The Academy will be able to handle it in the short term, but those schools running a deficit will find it a challenge. The Church of England is an overseeing body but provides no funding for the school. Core funding for the school this year has reduced by £20,000 – which is basically one teacher. In real terms school funding is not protected; the DfE has reformed its funding formula, and this is very complicated. Briscoe Primary School is different as it receives a lot of funding through its high level of deprivation – measured by the number of children receiving free school meals (65%). The school is affected significantly by its community, i.e. what is going on outside it. There is a large senior leadership team at Briscoe Primary School due to the unpredictability of the local community and time rightly devoted to safeguarding and child protection which is over and above the average a school would normally expect. There are significant problems with many parents, and much less parental support for the children. This in equity can be seen easily across the group of schools and how the curriculum is context driven due to individual school needs. We also think carefully about new models of leadership and what schools need rather than old models which are sometimes unhelpful. We always looking at succession planning and overstaff in all schools.

Lee stated Early Years disadvantaged funding is essentially based on free school meals, which means other factors are not taken into consideration. It is no longer targeted and

this has had a big impact. As a pre-school provider, this impacts on the ability to intervene quickly enough, as there is no funding for some pupils. The pre-school at Briscoe Primary is very good, and when children start in Reception the difference between those who have been to the pre-school and those who have not is very noticeable. There is certainly a problem in some private providers, with the quality of the staff due to poor pay and the lack of a qualified teacher overseeing provision. So often these children enter school without being “school ready” with the resulting issues about catching up and missing lost learning opportunities.

Debbie stated there is also a high level of turbulence in Basildon schools generally, as there are significant areas of temporary housing, which leads to many people moving frequently. People do not see the reality of communities that are treated as “White British Underclass” which has a very different culture to what would historically have been called working class. There is a level of chaos faced by many children at Briscoe Primary; it is extremely deprived, with very serious issues, like alcohol, domestic violence and mental health. This impacts on the ability of families to cope with the challenges of bringing up children and living in poverty and on the ability of schools in these areas to cope themselves with the high level of need, deprivation and challenges it brings. The Trust employs mental health workers to provide clinical supervision for staff as a result of this. Pupil premium supports this as it does the leadership structure of the school. Staff do an amazing job.

A question was asked about the support teachers give to children not fulfilling their potential? Debbie responded that at Briscoe Primary School the aim is to reach normal achievement targets and beyond. The support for teaching and the basic intention is that every lesson is good. High quality teaching is the first step. Across the trust, there is also support for reading and maths, but also speech therapy, and mental health – for the children, their parents and staff.

Data gathering is a key to success. Information on how every child is performing is collected and studied by staff. An early baseline is established and then there is early intervention, with tight tracking throughout and half termly expectations which ensure children achieve Age appropriate expectations. Children can achieve, with the right teaching, even with problems such as dyslexia. The number of 11-year-olds who should be able to achieve a Level 4B should be 95%. A link to Indian students is utilised, giving 1:1 tutoring online. There is an emphasis on access to learning, children go on trips. Learning to deal with risks is seen as an important part of the children’s education as is having access to opportunities that they would not normally be able to have such as tutoring, visits to other parts of the country, residential visits. We want to balance out the impact of deprivation and open children’s eyes to what is on offer in the world.

Debbie stated Essex is a relatively affluent county with seemingly mediocre attainment levels. A great deal of hysteria confronts failing schools, and a culture of blame. There has to be a suitable culture to build confidence in the staff and ensure that in those areas where there are the most challenges and where the most resilient and skilled people are. What is required are systems, support and structures to allow the best people to lead there. Old models of leadership and support constrain this.

A question was posed about what the Trust is doing right, and what ECC can do to help? Debbie responded that *Ofsted* is irrelevant, but we try not to worry about them. Mostly all

we are worried about is teaching the children. We have a responsibility to the children and their parents, not to *Ofsted*. The *Ofsted* approach impacts on the local authority and sometimes results in a stress and pressure on schools which has the opposite effect of what is intended. Public humiliation is not the answer. The attitude should be “this is an opportunity to develop and improve the school” not “You’re rubbish”. The best qualified and most special people should be employed to work in Basildon and Harlow and the Local Authority should be supporting this process, rather than trying to micro-manage failing schools. The Local Authority should be looking to help, but the achievements of the schools are the responsibility of the schools themselves. For instance, a RAG rating may could be done by the schools themselves, but not by the Local Authority or in the case of academies the HT board. Schools need to be talked up, not battered by the kind of hysteria that accompanies failing schools. All children in Essex, whether they be at a Maintained School or an Academy, are still Essex children and the Task and Finish Group should be interested in them all – not just those in maintained schools.

Site Visit to Briscoe Primary School, Felmores End, Pitsea SS13 1PN

Present:

Erica Barnett – Head of School

Lee Faris, Early Years Manager

- The school is 5th out of the 863 schools in Essex in terms of social deprivation
- The school is close to an estate with a lot of temporary accommodation. It had a 45% turnover in some year groups last year. The spirit of the Fair Access protocol was not in our view employed by planning and admissions during the journey out of special measures.
- School provides social care as well as education.
- The level of SEN in the school is well above average.
- The school pays for speech therapists and educational psychologists and health workers, who also offer counselling to parents
- The maintained nursery (‘The Orchard’) offers three-hours a day, five days a week but does not offer childcare. At the age of 3 children go to the school nursery, which is run by a qualified teacher. There are currently 26 children at age 3, but next year there will be 42. Unless they are Early Years Premium the children do not get automatic admission to the maintained nursery
- School achievement is now at national average or above.

A question was posed as to what the benefit of the affiliation with Wickford Church of England School is. Erica responded the Wickford Church of England School has good structures and they worked brilliantly which enabled us to transfer them here. Over the last two years we have very much become our own school. The school was one of Michael Gove’s 200 failing schools. The school has a very high turnover and it is difficult to be consistent. Behaviour was appalling but we set in place a very strict policy and now the school’s behaviour is outstanding. The culture of the school has changed – the children are now proud to be here. However, it is an exhausting place to work and at times has odd days.

Erica stated that the introduction of the Pupil Premium really has improved the educational attainment of the children. The very high level of Pupil Premium pays for uniform (including PE kit and shoes) for certain children, it also pays for a wide range of activities. There are over 20 after- or pre-school clubs, which are all free. It has a huge impact and is used skilfully, targeting the most needy children.

A question was raised whether the school would you have been able to achieve what it has without the Pupil Premium? Erica responded the Pupil Premium has enabled us to do more but creativity, recruitment and retention of high quality staff is key. Open thinking of senior management can change the teaching. Education has changed over the last 15 years. The ethos of good schools linking with other schools is such a good thing.

Erica stated that Local Authorities occasionally give the impression of “our schools” and Academies. School to school support could be used more strategically and effectively.

A question was raised about Children’s Centres. Lee responded that they are usually very good but that the quality varies and not all Children’s Centres regulate their nursery. Two and 3-year olds being taught/overseen by qualified teachers would increase future educational attainment.

Erica referred to the Nurture Group at the school which assists in growing the self-esteem of children who, for whatever reason, are being encouraged back into the education system. Many of these children are emotionally damaged and the school is able to get them back into mainstream education. The school has an application to extend the Nurture Group and has high quality resources funded by the County for the children within it.

Task and Finish Group meeting

The Task and Finish Group received a contribution from Councillor Ray Gooding, Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning; Chris Kiernan, Interim Director of Commissioning: Education and Lifelong Learning and Richard Thomas, Executive Director of the Association of Secondary Headteachers in Essex (ASHE). Following Member feedback on the visits to Wickford Church of England Infant School and Briscoe Primary School conducted in the morning the contributors responded that many Headteachers with on-site provision, make comment on the standards of children coming into pre-school from private sector providers; and such comments should be judged on this basis. *Ofsted* reports of pre-school private providers in Essex show that 80% are either outstanding or good; and that none in Basildon are inadequate. Essex has moved from 135th to 50th last year; and 57th this year in terms of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) results at the end of the Reception year.

The County is looking at things that sustain successful schools through a commitment to accountability; and it is recognised that Essex County Council needs to give a clearer message of what it is doing as the distinction is blurred with schools, at present, in terms of school improvement. Steps had been made in the last five years which have been significant in terms of improving educational attainment, including in primary schools in

Basildon. In general Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 results are improving and becoming sustainable.

There is reliable data available which compares Essex with the rest of England; with the county's ten statistical neighbours; and the rest of the East of England. With regard to Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Essex is one point ahead of the rest of the country; two points behind statistical neighbours; and level with the rest of the region. At KS2 in 2011 Essex was 91st and is now 68th which puts the county just ahead of the rest of England; generally ahead of the East of England and even with the statistical neighbours. At KS4 Essex is 0.2% behind the national average; but us doing well at KS5.

Since September 2014 40 schools in Essex have been subject to an Ofsted inspection and 80% of these have been good or better which is hitting the national average. School attendance has improved in the county. The introduction of fixed penalty notices has had a significant effect. The attendance levels at primary schools in the county are now outstanding at above 96% The overall absence rate is 3.84% including unauthorised absences – this compares very favourably with the national rate of 3.89%. The penalty notices have focused minds that sanctions are in place and will be used.

Following a question from Cllr Bobbin about whether there has been any improvement in attainment levels at schools which have become Primary rather than split Infant and Junior Schools the Task and Finish Group heard that transferring from one school to another can become traumatic for a child so a seamless process is a preferred option. Both in Essex and nationally Primary Schools do better than Infant and Junior Schools. However, Essex County Council has no jurisdiction to force this. A review of Infant and Junior Schools was undertaken last year and a report was produced.

Following a question from Cllr Barker relating to Children's Centres a response came that indicated Children's Centres need to become a more targeted service and go back to first principles. There are areas of concern in the county despite Essex having Ofsted reports better than the national average.

Following a question from Cllr Barker relating to schools, potentially, changing behaviour due to the first entry rule, the Task and Finish Group heard it would be interesting to see the results based on best entry. The new measurements will be a fairer measurement of progress but will be more demanding in challenging areas.

In relation to school staffing in the county it was reported that between 10-20% of staff in Essex schools are 'imported' from overseas, with Canada and Ireland supplying many staff. There is 100 overseas staff being trained to go into schools in Colchester and Tendring. This is a reflection on a national system that is struggling in terms of recruitment. Last year 50,000 teachers nationally left teaching. The biggest wastage is in the first five years of teaching. Headteacher hours are increasing, with Primary Heads working, on average, 50-59 hours per week; and Secondary Heads working, on average, 59-64 hours per week. There are 17 Teaching School Alliances in Essex more than any other county in the country. However, there are not enough applicants for training places. The Cabinet Member stated recruitment is very difficult in certain subjects, for example there have been 97 jobs advertised for mathematics teachers this year. Two years ago Government data showed that there were not enough mathematicians in training to fill current vacancies.

With regard to vocational education the Task and Finish Group heard that there has never been the investment in this country as there is in other parts of Europe. It is also likely that the new performance measures will push schools away from vocational programmes.

The Cabinet Member informed the Group that there is no evidence that there are differences in attainment levels in single sex schools. Indeed, most independent schools are now co-educational. Social development also works better in a co-educational environment. The Cabinet Member also stated there is likely to be a significant issue regarding teachers taking early retirement, due to the change in pension and national insurance contributions. This might influence teaching staff when they are budgeting and planning for the in-between years between early retirement and the national retirement age. There could be a 3% increase in staffing costs for a school. In real terms this could mean a 5% fall in overall budget taking into account salary increases and non-teaching staff. Schools will need to plan how it will budget for this change. Some schools are holding excessive balances at around 10% and they will need to reduce this.

Wednesday, 4 March 2015

Task and Finish Group meeting (morning session)

The Task and Finish Group received contributions from Dr Tim Coulson, Regional Schools Commissioner for the East of England, Department for Education (DfE); Councillor Terri Sargent, Basildon Borough Council; Councillor Graham Butland, Leader and Andy Wright, Corporate Director, Braintree District Council; Councillor Peter Greig, Councillor Ray Howard and Councillor Neville Watson, Castle Point Borough Council; and Councillor Terry Cutmore, Leader, Rochford District Council. Additionally, Councillor Susan Barker provided a contribution on behalf of Uttlesford District Council where she is Deputy Leader.

Braintree District Council

Councillor Butland and Andy Wright highlighted issues in the Braintree District. The Braintree town area has three secondary schools all of which are performing below national averages. Therefore, people in the town have no real choice when it comes to selecting a school for a quality provision. There are also difficulties in Witham; however, the two schools are now improving, with the teaching at Maltings Academy having improved markedly. The Headteacher of the school is leading from the front and there are now no excuses for not performing well.

Braintree District Council provided a synopsis in advance of the meeting (see Appendix 2) outlining the schools in the district as well as attainment levels and other issues affecting the district in terms of education, growth and housing, and health. Cllr Butland stated he saw a role for district councils in improving educational attainment. The council is going to establish an Educational Improvement Group as agreed by the ECC Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning.

Students joining secondary schools in Braintree town are significantly behind what might be expected. Andy Wright mentioned the School Improvement Team at ECC has been looking at the data relating to schools in Braintree. There is a pattern throughout the

district of individual schools turning themselves around, for example The Rickstones School and The Ramsey School in Halstead which jumped two Ofsted levels after its last inspection.

EYFS has Braintree as the worst performing district in the county in terms of attainment. The County is currently undertaking an Early Years Strategy Review. Primary Schools in the district, which were once performing well, are now playing 'catch-up' due to the EYFS results.

Following a question from Cllr Bobbin, Cllr Butland stated the district council, in terms of economic growth, sees the gap between the high-earners and low-earners as important to encourage people into the district for inward investment. The district area is a net-importer in terms of migration.

Recruitment of teachers in Braintree district is a major issue with one school going to Australia, Canada and Ireland to recruit staff. Many of the teaching staff live outside the district.

Castle Point Borough Council

Councillor Greig and Councillor Watson stated Canvey Island is a unique area, it is difficult to get teachers to the island. Travelling into or off the island is a real issue. Therefore, many of the teachers at island schools actually live there. There is apocryphal evidence that teachers on the island are concerned about class sizes. If there is a large influx of migrant children it might become a serious problem for the schools. It was agreed that this is, potentially, an issue across Essex and should be referred to in the final report of the Task and Finish Group.

ACTION

The Task and Finish Group invites a response from the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning with regard to the influx of migrant children into Essex and the subsequent impact this has on class sizes in the county

Owner: Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning

Basildon Borough Council

Councillor Sargent informed the Group that Basildon is an area of low attainment and has had an education panel for the last four years involving Basildon County Members, Basildon Borough Council Cabinet Members and the ECC Cabinet member for Education and Lifelong Learning. There are 76 Primary Schools in the district rated either outstanding or good; and the development of Early Years is very good. There are no schools in the Primary sector now rated as inadequate. However, there are children in the borough who are not ready to start school. The County Council launched an initiative in the Lee Chapel North area of the borough which is now making very good progress. It is important that once intense work is undertaken the school should continue to run with the improvements.

Basildon has one of the highest rates of teenage pregnancies. There are projects ongoing which are improving the situation but the Borough Council is concerned what might happen if funding is withdrawn. To date, the County Council has been a great help.

The focus of the Excellence Partnership Panel in Basildon has been on Early Years as well as getting good school governors. The concentration is on the Basildon town area, rather than the entirety of the Borough.

Following a question from Cllr Barker, Cllr Sargent agreed that the provision of an on-site pre-school, whilst potentially expensive, does have great benefits. Having the Early Years experience is absolutely vital and children in Basildon are benefitting from Early Years intervention to help prepare them for school.

Rochford District Council

Councillor Cutmore stated that there are areas of concern in the Rochford district related to primary schools. The skills of pupils coming forward into secondary schools is an issue as a result. Cllr Cutmore stated that there are many self-employed people that require help and support to update their skills so the standards in Further and Adult Education should be considered too. The Group has requested data on Further Education College performance.

Cllr Cutmore mentioned the development work that is to be undertaken in the Rochford DC area, and, therefore, there is a concern over the capacity of schools in the area to take on additional student numbers. Cllr Sargent stated that Noak Bridge Primary School has a planning application for a five-year extension of its Portakabins. All the extra housing within local plans needs to come into the mix, and it should be ensured that there are school places going forward. A further issue in Rochford is transportation as much of the district is rural.

Uttlesford District Council

On behalf of Uttlesford District Council Councillor Barker stated when reflecting upon data it should be ensured that what is presented is correct. Data for particular schools should be reviewed so that any potential problems can be picked up before any problems arise. Moving forward there could be an issue if schools are closed and then need to be re-opened due to the increase in housing.

Regional Schools Commissioner for the East of England

Dr Coulson explained his role at the Department for Education (DfE) working with Academies and Free Schools as well as other individual institutions. Dr Coulson works across the region and Essex is in a good situation, but it could be better. Norfolk and Suffolk are struggling and Cambridgeshire has the poorest funding and attainment in the region. Essex is performing at the level of the national average and it would not take a great deal of impetus to push the county further forward.

The secondary schools in Clacton-on-Sea, Harlow and Witham will soon all be rated as good schools; there have also been great improvements in Brentwood and Rochford, with Basildon improving also. There are, however, concerns about Braintree. Both Chelmsford and Colchester are unfulfilled areas with the schools, outside the Grammar Schools, not achieving as well as they could. Dr Coulson confirmed his opinion that there is now a real opportunity to influence the next drive for school improvement in the county. Dr Coulson stated that the school which stands out as the best in the region is Burnt Mill Academy in Harlow.

Dr Coulson confirmed the recruitment problems schools in the region have; and schools are now taking the opportunity to train their own teachers on the job. The DfE recognises that Academies are no panacea and that some schools have declined since leaving Local Authority control.

Ofsted, in its annual report, stated in the East of England nursery education, on the whole, is better than it is nationally; but then there is a sliding scale in primary, secondary and further education where standards get worse as each transition is reached.

Dr Coulson posed himself two questions: how do we shift the agenda to have the ambition and determination to succeed? How can we expect more from schools? He stated that there are some schools which aspire; whilst others do not. In the London Borough of Redbridge half the secondary schools are outstanding; and in the London Borough of Haringey every single secondary school is at least good. Therefore, we need to raise the level of what schools should be able to achieve. Cllr Barker posed whether the ethnic diversity of these two London Boroughs meant parents had more demanding expectations of their children? Dr Coulson responded that what the two London Boroughs have are different circumstances to Essex. They had momentum and positive leadership which said they could improve and this gathered steam. In Essex the positive leadership is there in a number of schools with Witham and Clacton being good examples of such localities. Tendring, in particular is a real success story for secondary education and replicating this success is the challenge for the county.

Cllr Barker posed the question whether the increase in National Insurance and pension contributions will have an impact upon schools? Dr Coulson answered that school funding will get more difficult and that some schools will do better through collaboration. Schools are, in the main, developing better business acumen. It is likely, however, that primary schools will come under pressure in terms of funding in the next five years; and may, therefore, be forced to work collaboratively to find savings. Governance has not been strong enough in schools. Many schools have become only as good as their latest headteacher, and strong governance would be able to guard against this. Schools are increasingly on their own with regard to funding and there is an imperative for them to think about their own ways of making savings in a continued regime of lower funding.

Cllr Howard stated Canvey Island has excellent schools; but when a school fails it gets poor press. One primary school on the island has a situation where the Headteacher has been seconded to a failing school in London. The management team at the island school, which is trying to get out of special measures, have all gone off sick. Therefore, it is extremely difficult for the school to get out of its situation. There have been examples, on the island, of other schools being turned around from being placed in special measures. Dr Coulson responded that the challenge of the system is to have enough educational leaders who allow the teachers to perform. There is a plan for the school in special measures on Canvey Island and Dr Coulson assured Cllr Howard that he will make sure colleagues at ECC let the local Members know.

Cllr Barker stated the Task and Finish Group had heard from a number of sources that many children are not school-ready when they start the Reception year. Therefore, is there any evidence which backs this up? Dr Coulson responded that Headteachers are saying this and that ten years ago it was not an issue. Nursery education in Essex is patchy; and the most effective way to tackle the problem is through the providers which are linked to schools. Much of the nursery provision linked to schools takes children

aged as young as two and there is clear evidence across the country that indigenous white working-class children are performing poorly including in early literacy. Dr Coulson stated he is keen on nursery provision being linked to schools to tackle early literacy issues.

Dr Coulson's views echoed those heard on the site visits to Wickford Church of England Infant School and Briscoe Primary School as well as at the Task and Finish Group meeting with the Schools Forum members. It was agreed that the Final Report of the Task and Finish Group would include a **RECOMMENDATION** about linking Early Years provision with Infant/Primary schools.

With regard to his own roles and responsibilities Dr Coulson stated schools who wish to become Academies have to come through him; this is also the case for any organisation wishing to become an Academy sponsor. Additionally he deals with applications for Free Schools; Academies which merge and he carries-out interventions when Academies are not performing.

Cllr Barker asked when will the time come when Local Authorities no longer become necessary for education as more-and-more schools become an Academy; and as a result what will Education Services of Local Authorities do? Dr Coulson responded that one way might be through sharing services with other Local Authorities. The formal responsibilities may subside but there will still be a role and influence for Local Authorities. Dr Coulson stated that Essex has the best Schools Human Resources Department in the region, and he would expect schools to continue to buy into ECC Schools Human Resources.

Dr Coulson mentioned evidence relating to summer-born children who are 25% more likely to get a statement of special educational needs; much less likely to get into school sports teams and do not achieve as highly in GCSE examinations.

Task and Finish Group meeting (afternoon session)

The Task and Finish Group had been invited to attend the meeting of the Essex School Governors Association (ESGA) Executive Committee by Ruth Bird, Chairman of the Committee. Cllr Maggie McEwen thanked Ruth for the invitation. As well as Ruth, Russell Ayling, Debbi Botham, John Clarke, John Hunter, Rod Lane and Joyce Sweeney from the Executive Committee were in attendance.

Cllr Bobbin asked, given the changing role of School Governors, how can the Local Authority find suitable Governors for schools and how can the Governors assist in raising educational attainment?

It was responded that just because somebody has been a Governor for a long time it does not follow that they are, necessarily, a good Governor. The National School Governors Association is encouraging Chairman to issue reports, once a year, on the effectiveness of Governors and the contribution they make to the school. Schools are also encouraged to do similar with the Chair of School Governors. With Multi-Academy Trusts the School Governors are practically all business people.

Maintained schools have to reconstitute and look at the make-up of their governing bodies by September 2015. Instead of community governors there will be co-opted governors. Therefore, this opens up the opportunity for governing bodies to find people with the necessary skills rather than be people from the community.

The Task and Finish Group heard that two threads impact upon attainment. One is that there is very rarely any joined-up thinking in terms of the multi-system of governance across Academy Trusts, Sponsored Academy Trusts, Academies, Maintained schools and Foundation schools. Wider than this the ways in which Governors are expected to keep up-to-speed as much as school senior management teams also has a lack of joined-up thinking. Therefore, too much time is spent on doing this than considering raising attainment levels.

Governors who come from business backgrounds are more able to keep up-to-date with training and have the commitment to do this. The training available from County ensures that professional people view the training as professional personal development. Parent Governors are much less likely to take-up training opportunities. The Parent Governor issue might be solved through the reconstitution of governing bodies in September 2015. ESGA is working with governing bodies to ensure a maximum of two-four Parent Governors.

Some Academies are attempting to move to having no parental or staff representation on governing bodies; and looking to business expertise only. However, there is nothing wrong with having a different range of expertise on a school governing body. When he was Education Secretary Michael Gove stated there should be paid School Governors. Some Governors are in schools three or four times a week; however, the opinion was this was too much. Every school is different but the pressures are practically the same, and these pressures put many potential Governors off. There is an absolute need that people in authority should have a system of joined-up support and thinking to action the one aim of improving the educational attainment of children. If you challenge, as a School Governor, you can get answers. Cllr Bobbin asked whether School Governors should receive a retainer? This was answered emphatically “no”; however, there are examples of Governors being paid by the sponsors of Academies.

The Task and Finish Group heard that the recruitment of teachers is difficult, and even more so for Headteachers. In deprived areas recruitment is even harder. Schools in the county spend thousands of pounds on recruitment. To aid recruitment there are examples of schools providing housing on-site for new recruits.

The Task and Finish Group heard a prediction that in five years' time there will not be any Local Authority maintained schools in Essex; and that schools will work in cluster-groups. The Local Authority has been looking at local needs and training for schools who work in cluster-groups.

Cllr McEwen asked whether, in the opinion of ESGA, there is anything that holds children back in educational achievement? The response was that good quality teaching and Headteachers was critical in ensuring student achievement. School finances were also raised as a concern, with some schools likely to be £250,000 worse off next year.

The ESGA reflected upon the understanding of data and how it is used within a school setting. Data drives up standards when the senior leadership team of a school uses the data to assess individual student progress. Governors need to be more focussed on data and performance management it was stated.

School Effectiveness Plus is being piloted in 70 schools. It is an online system that will provide a school effectiveness plan and make comparisons within a group of schools. This was highly commended by the ESGA and it was suggested the Task and Finish Group look at the system.

Playing devils' advocate it was asked why do we need the Pupil Premium? Many parents do not claim free school meals that they are entitled to and this has an impact upon funding.

Cllr McEwen asked whether Governors play an important role in raising school attainment? The response was that they do; and the relationship between the Headteacher and the Chair of School Governors is vital to ensure attainment levels are raised. The challenges made of the Headteacher at governing body meetings should all be minuted. It is crucial that School Governors see the school as a business, and with the correct governance Governors can be the critical friend and the challenge to the school and the senior leadership team. Therefore, it is crucial that governing bodies have the right committees, sub-committees and effective terms of reference. Governors also have a role to play in ensuring the health and wellbeing of senior leadership teams. Good governance is crucial in ensuring Governors are part of the leadership of the school. Ofsted can recommend a review of school governance structures.

Different schools and different governing bodies have different strengths and weaknesses; this should enable greater collaboration and support between governing bodies. It was agreed that a **RECOMMENDATION** be included in the Final Report of the Task and Finish Group to suggest more collaboration between governing bodies.

Friday, 17 April 2015

Site Visit to Shenfield High School, Alexander Lane, Brentwood, CM15 8RY

Present:

Carole Herman, Headteacher

Leanne Hedden, Chairman of Governors

Sal Blewett, Deputy Headteacher

Jenny Comerford, Deputy Headteacher

Carole Herman joined the school as Headteacher in September 2011. At this point the school was expecting to take pupils in from Sawyer's Hall College which was closing. Shenfield High School was to establish a vocational centre on the site of Sawyer's Hall College. However, within six months a Free School (Becket Keys Church of England Secondary School) application was made and approved for the site. As a result, Shenfield HS did not receive the funding it was expecting and, thus, the vocational centre did not materialise.

Shenfield High School was associated with a failing school and admitted a number of students from that school. As a result, the school's reputation was affected. An *Ofsted* inspection in 2009 rated the school as "satisfactory"; previous to that the rating was "good". There have been significant changes in the *Ofsted* frameworks, however. Then following an inspection in 2012 the school was rated as "requires improvement", basically the same as "satisfactory". The school was given two years to improve and it was inspected again in November 2014 and received a "good" rating. The school is of the opinion that it was very close to being rated as "outstanding". *Ofsted* recognised the pride the students had in the school; and that staff have worked hard to get the school where it currently is.

The school has changed its ethos. The values and philosophy of the school are agreed with the whole school community, working with parents, students, staff, governors and community leaders.

When Carole Herman joined the school she decided that every aspect of the institution be reviewed. Management systems were reviewed and a decision was taken to grow the staff within the school. The leadership team has changed almost completely, with only two of the current leadership team having served on the leadership team prior to the arrival of the Headteacher. These changes have assisted in moving the school forward.

The school is now more outcome focused, also aiming to ensure the students are geared up for when they leave school. The school has established a 'war room' and forensically looks at the achievements of all students through the analysis of data, with interventions taking place if students are not achieving at a level they should be expected to. The 'war room' is largely for staff, but is used for motivational sessions for identified students. The school has several data entry points throughout the year. However, the shifting of grade boundaries sometimes leads to students who are expected to achieve a certain grade not quite achieving as projected. Data is at the heart of everything the school does.

The walls of the 'war room' have all students in Years 10 through to 13 with their target grades identified, across all subject areas. Those identified as wavering between a 'C' and a 'D' grade are classed as 'C-' and have the level of improvement required to enable them to achieve a 'C' grade listed against them. The wall also identifies the number of students who need to improve their outcomes to achieve different percentage levels of five 'A*-C' grades at GCSE. However, this school year is the last that will have the five 'A*-C' measurement as standard, as schools, from next year, will be measured against the Progress 8 and Attainment 8 standards. This new measurement aims to erase the false divide between those who achieve a 'C' grade and those who do not. Progress 8 will show how students progress against eight curriculum areas. Carole stated that this is philosophically better but will be difficult to measure and manage.

Progress of children is measured from the end of Key Stage 2; however, primary and secondary assess differently. Carole informed the Task and Finish Group that secondary schools often find Year 7 students coming in to the school with a Level 5 but when they are tested they are actually lower than that. However, the primary school measurement is the starting point used for progress assessment. With regard to Progress 8 if students do not take the eight subjects because, for example, their literacy skills are not strong enough for them to take a Humanities subject it will make it appear that the school itself is not achieving.

With regard to A-levels Shenfield High School has a progress-led measurement and interventions are taken when progress is not being made as expected. The school sixth form has a base area, common room and study spaces with lessons taking place throughout the school site. Around 60% of the previous Year 11's are admitted into the sixth form; plus others students are admitted from outside the school. The school does some BTEC qualifications in sport and performing arts alongside traditional A-levels.

The school has a Football Academy and a Cricket Academy, and a Performing Arts Academy starts in September 2015. Students receive professional coaching and Masterclasses at the Academies which supplement their A-level and BTEC studies.

Shenfield High School is in a competitive area. Admissions at the school have been hit by the opening of the Becket Keys Free School. The opening of the Ongar Academy is also likely to have an effect. Additionally, changes to the Essex County Council school transport policy is likely to see parents sending their children to the Ongar Academy because of the cheaper travel rather than go to schools in Brentwood.

In terms of Special Educational Needs the school works closely with the students and parents to ensure specific needs are met and the school is aware of the prevalence of mental health needs of young people. The school has a nurture group, known as the Oasis Centre, with specialist staff for children who are having difficulties and need respite from mainstream education. The aim is to nurture the young people through their difficult periods back into mainstream education, if possible.

Sal Bluett informed the Task and Finish Group about the approach to staff development at the school. Staff at the school are in receipt of professional development to support student attainment, progress and achievement. The approach to staff development has three strands to it:

- the needs of the individual
- the needs of the department
- the needs of the school

School staff are asked to identify their own development needs. Staff development programmes are broken down into three sessions. Sal stated that colleagues have better practice if they are able to reflect and put what they have learned into practice; and then reflect again after putting the development into practice. Schemes of work are prepared through departmental training.

The school creates a 'pen portrait' of teaching staff and grades them as practitioners from a broad evidence base. Through cleverly crafted questions, the school asks the students how they learn within specific lessons and curriculum areas. The school has a two-week marking cycle. Students like the new way of marking the school has introduced which includes comments on what they are doing well, and what they need to do to improve further still. The students have to respond to the marking comments. As part of their monitoring visits the school governors look at marking.

Shenfield High School has several IT suites, one specifically for use by the sixth form. The school library has been re-vamped and is now a much more vibrant space and is

used by book groups, craft groups etc. The school opens between 8.00 a.m. and an hour after the final school bell.

Jenny Comerford informed the Group that the interventions team at the school provide support on all the different aspects of student wellbeing. Both student mental health and self-harming is quite prevalent, so the school looks at patterns of behaviour and provides targeted support.

The vocational centre and the Oasis Centre are part of the strategic developments to support students. The Oasis Centre is a provision for any child who, through behaviour patterns, finds mainstream school difficult. Adults in the school provide 1:1 mentoring. A national programme *Achievement for All* provides support for children and families from a triangle of support. The first point of the triangle is the mentor within the school, whether a teacher or a member of support staff; the second point of the triangle is the student themselves. The mentor and the student meet together at least once a fortnight. The final point of the triangle is the parent/carer. The mentor within the school should liaise with the parent/carer to assist in the identification of the issue; and then a programme of support is developed from this triangulation. The parent/carer comes into the school once a year with other required communication on at least three other times in the year; however, the communication is usually much more frequent than that and helps in maintaining good dialogue. The school had a pilot programme involving 40 students and this whole cohort achieves as well as, if not a little better, the rest of the school's students. It is recognised that 'one size doesn't fit all' in terms of interventions. Each year between 20-30 students are identified in each year group for intervention (this is around 15% of the school population). Services, for example Child Mental Health Services, are at capacity outside of school so Shenfield High School provides the services otherwise the student would fall through the gap.

The nurture group is funded from mainstream resources rather than the pupil premium. *Ofsted* recognised that the school retains students that others exclude to ensure they are able to achieve.

A question was raised as to what the County Council can do to improve the lot of schools? In response it was stated that issues are coming back as the responsibility of the school because the services outside the school system are at capacity. Schools are developing expertise within diminishing budgets; and having to change systems to tackle the next potential hurdle. Monies are going down yet demands are increasing. There needs to be a more appropriate overview recognising the finite resource.

Task and Finish Group meeting

The Members who had attended the visit to Shenfield High School highlighted the special needs provision, the impact on the school of the opening of two new Free Schools in the locality, the marking schemes at the school and the impact of the data the school collects on every child from Year 10-13 to support attainment and intervention. The impact on the school of the new transport policy of Essex County Council was also mentioned, particularly with reference to the creation of the new Free School, Ongar Academy. This will mean a reduced choice for those who cannot afford transport.

The Task and Finish Group considered the data presented to the full People and Families Scrutiny Committee on Thursday, 12 March, 2015 (see Appendix 3a and 3b) in greater detail. The data was presented by Clare Kershaw, Head of Commissioning, Education and Lifelong Learning; Alison Fiala, Lead Commissioner, Primary Education; and Huw Jones, Senior Analyst. Cllr McEwen stated the data shows that Essex is, by-and-large, in the third quartile on the key metrics. The response was given that the aim is to move the county into the top quartile. Historically at KS2 and KS4 Essex has only increased at the same pace as the national average; and this places the county in the lower end of second quartile or into the third quartile. However, if outcomes were increased for students in these two Key Stages at a rate higher than the national average this would place Essex firmly in the second quartile. The Task and Finish Group were informed that there are now more good or outstanding schools, based upon *Ofsted* frameworks, in the county than there have ever been.

There has been significant improvement in Early Years in Essex, which is at the top of the second quartile nationally. This should mean that there will be higher achieving young people coming through the system in future years. In primary schools the county is working to deliver interventions. One of these interventions is *Talk for Writing* and there is another which is directed at boys' writing. Boys have been a deliberate focus for interventions as there is a significant gap in the outcomes for boys and girls KS2 writing. The County Council also commissions bespoke programmes for individual schools so that identified students can improve. There is also a shadowing programme which allows certain schools to learn from others that are performing well.

Key Stage 2 writing outcomes are not externally assessed, unlike Mathematics. However, the County Council moderates the teacher assessed elements of the primary curriculum as this is a statutory duty.

Two years ago, Essex, in line with what occurred nationally, had higher results in Mathematics than in English at KS4. Now, schools have focused so significantly on their English outcomes over the last two years that this has had an effect on Mathematics attainment. Therefore, Mathematics continues to be a significant challenge. There is a scarcity of good Mathematics teachers and there has been recruitment from overseas to plug the gaps. And a new GCSE curriculum is about to be introduced, which will be harder than the present one. One positive intervention on Mathematics is at Tendring Technology College, which is developing a curriculum in partnership with local primary schools from KS1 all the way through schooling. This should help pupils cope with the Year 6 to Year 7 break, which had always proved challenging.

Every school in Essex is RAG rated and the data presented to the Task and Finish Group, and previously the full People and Families Scrutiny Committee, is a significant part of these ratings. It was suggested that future annual reports look at providing some more detailed information, to make it easier to see where improvements had been made.

ACTION

The Task and Finish Group would wish future Educational Attainment in Essex Annual Reports to provide detailed information to afford more clarity where improvements have been made

Owner: Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning

The data shows that despite Tendring, Basildon and Harlow being the lowest achieving districts the progress each is making exceeds that of more affluent districts. For example, Tendring has improved at KS2 by 12% over the last two years, comparing favourably against the 4% improvement across the county.

Essex is a large county and it requires a significant number of students or schools to improve outcomes to impact positively on data. Overall last year the results were good for Essex and the county is constantly striving to exceed national averages. To get into the second quartile Essex requires 450 primary school students and 550 secondary school students to improve their outcomes. Most of the Local Authorities in the top quartile are smaller unitary authorities or London/Metropolitan Boroughs which have a smaller number of schools and students. Following a question it was stated that 160 children would have to improve their KS2 writing outcomes for the county to improve by 1%.

Although the Council does assess vocational courses in schools; it does not have a remit to do this in Further Education Colleges (FECs), but it does monitor their outcomes. There is an uneven situation in Post-16 education, as there are a number of qualifications that do not earn the schools anything in respect of performance; also, not all qualifications are reported at the same time. There are a number of staff at the Council, however, who look at the quality of school sixth forms.

A question was raised as to whether *Ofsted* help or hinder the improvement of attainment; and whether it looks at the right issues? In response it was stated that *Ofsted* provide external accountability and that this is crucial. *Ofsted* is in the midst of changing its frameworks; however. The quality of teaching is the most important thing with leadership fundamental in ensuring this. Where it does not go right is *Ofsted* depending upon the quality of its own staff and the inconsistencies in how the framework is interpreted. The County Council is able to feed back through the *Ofsted* regional body. A good or outstanding school should use *Ofsted* as a check and balance and not drive its whole ethos through *Ofsted*, as it can cause a great deal of stress through continually trying to improve its *Ofsted* assessment.

Thursday, 23 April 2015

The Task and Finish Group received contributions from Dr Mike Gogarty, Director of Commissioning Healthy Lifestyles and Jane Richards, Head of Commissioning, Public Health; Councillor Giles Watling, Chairman, Education and Skills Committee and Keri Lawrence, Executive Projects Manager; Malcolm Morley, Chief Executive, Harlow District Council; and Mike Blant, Liaison Officer, Essex Primary Headteachers Association (EPHA).

Public Health

The key issues for Public Health in relation to education were identified as the evidence base for the links between attainment and wellbeing – there is a national and international evidence base around this; school readiness, to enable children to achieve throughout their educational lives; the commissioning of the 0-19 Healthy Child programme – this includes working with other Local Authorities, as well as the voluntary sector and other Public Sector bodies; and the Essex Healthy Schools Award.

The 5-19 service is the key service working with schools and school staff. School nurses work closely with individual schools and conduct needs assessments through discussion with Headteachers and other staff with interests in health and wellbeing. Schools often raise issues around physical activity, healthy living, bullying etc. The needs assessments are undertaken annually. When particular issues are identified individual children may also be seen by the school nurse. In relation to schools for children with special educational needs the school nurse sees every child within the school.

Where programmes exist there are positive effects on attainment and it has been identified that students with better health and wellbeing are likely to achieve better academically.

In order to achieve the Healthy Schools Award schools have to have an active programme of working with children, in an age appropriate way, to raise the awareness of bullying.

In relation to school readiness an assessment to test a Good Level of Development (GLD) is conducted by a teacher following the Reception year. There are 17 measurements making-up the GLD, including communication and language; physical development; personal, social and emotional development; and numeracy and literacy skills. In Essex 61% of children achieved GLD in 2014 – this is 1% higher than the national average. The lowest achieving district in the county was Braintree (57%) and the highest was Maldon (67%). For those in receipt of Free School Meals only 43% achieved a GLD, as opposed to 64% achieving a GLD not in receipt of Free School Meals. This measurement was based on a cohort of 16,000 young people – 14% of whom were in receipt of Free School Meals. There is a small contingent of parents who do not claim Free School Meals despite their entitlement to do so.

A school readiness map for Tendring District was provided and, subsequently, these were provided for all districts. These are available to view at Appendix n. It was explained that the school readiness maps do change year-on-year so there is an element of caution which comes attached to them. It was stated the key issue in relation to school readiness is during pre-school. There is a universal 15 hours free provision for all 3-4 year olds; and an additional free entitlement for 2-3 year olds.

The interventions Public Health is involved with are within three broad areas; namely Home Visiting, Parenting programmes and Pre-school. In terms of home visiting these are the Department of Health recommended Family Nurse Partnership and MESCH (Maternal Educational Social Care and Health), which aims to improve the transition to parenting by supporting mothers through pregnancy; improve maternal health and wellbeing by helping mothers to care for themselves; improve child health and development by helping parents to interact with their child in developmentally supportive ways; develop and promote parents' aspirations for themselves and their children; and helping parents to foster relationships within the family and with other families and services. MESCH is an intensive support programme. The Family Nurse Partnership has been rolled-out across Essex and is a programme working with young parents where the mother is under the age of 20. It is also an intensive programme which supports the family through the post-natal period and informs the family of the programmes and support they are entitled to ensuring they access the right services by acting as a family advocate.

Parenting programmes and pre-school programmes are also targeted interventions. The parenting programmes are Triple-P which uses a range of material for a universal or targeted approach and is used from the age of 2 onwards. This is delivered in two-hours sessions for up to ten weeks and reinforces positive relationships and behaviour. There are a range of trials using meta-analysis and evaluations which support improved behaviour, lowering stress of parents and improving parenting skills. The other parenting programme is Incredible Years which intervenes with 3-4 year olds over 12 weekly two-hour sessions and reinforces positive behaviour. The aim is to lower parenting stress, provide better parenting skills and improve behaviour – these outcomes have been tested in trial evidence.

The pre-school programme is based on evidence from a longitudinal study of pre-school education involving 3,000 children, of which 300 did not attend pre-school which showed those who attended pre-school achieved higher attainment levels at GCSE.

Public Health is working with Education and Lifelong Learning on a proposed model to reduce educational inequalities in the county. The model proposed is to produce a targeted offer for all families to have high quality pre-school provision.

The Healthy Child programme is a universal public health programme for children and families from pregnancy up to the age of 19. The vision is to develop an integrated offer to enable families to identify the services and key professionals who can assist them. Jane stated that we need to ensure an equitable offer across the county that is right for the families in different localities; as the needs in one part of the county will be very different from the needs in another. The programme is national with safeguarding at its very heart. The programme ensures that where families need support the critical agencies are aware of this; it also ensures there is no duplication of services. The key relationships for different families will also be different – for some, for example, it might be the Health Visitors for others that person will be someone in the Children's Centre.

The Healthy Schools programme will support schools throughout Essex to raise attainment and achievement by improving health and wellbeing for students, staff, parents and carers and the wider school community. There are 95% of schools in the county actively engaged on the programme.

Harlow District Council

The underperformance in Harlow in terms of educational attainment was highlighted by Malcolm Morley/ He referred to the written submission provided to the Task and Finish Group in advance of the meeting (see Appendix 4). It was stated the contribution by Public Health absolutely chimed with what is being found in the district. The ambition, however, is for Harlow to be in the top quartile in terms of attainment. Unless this becomes an aspiration the district and the county will continue to underperform. The view of the District Council is that there are no excuses to accepting that underperformance is down to areas of deprivation, and this should be challenged. For example, Burnt Mill High School is an outstanding school in a significant area of deprivation.

Harlow District Council undertook its own scrutiny review of educational attainment, and following this it created a partnership of people working together to understand the issues and work together to tackle these, Essex County Council is part of this

partnership. It is clear from the exercise that flexibility is needed to respond to individual needs. The District Council recognises that there are people who do not have aspirations for their children. However, the District Council has identified interventions which will enable families in this situation to move forward. Tackling hard-to-reach parents is resource intensive and the public sector needs to work together to address the issues, and provide a pick-and-mix rather than a generic offer.

ACTION

The Task and Finish Group would wish the Cabinet Member to report if, and how, the County Council is working with the public sector to work with hard-to-reach groups to raise educational engagement and attainment

Owner: Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning

It was stated that underperformance in Harlow has been tolerated for too long. The schools which are not performing should be challenged and supported to enable them to improve; and *Ofsted* can be used to assist in driving that change. The role of governors, parents and the school community is critical in engaging and supporting to give the opportunity to tackle underperformance.

Harlow does have issues related to school readiness; and this then has an on-going effect when moving from primary to secondary school. There are secondary schools in the locality working hard to address this.

One of the biggest challenges in Harlow is the issue of teacher recruitment and retention. Harlow District Council is asking questions as to how schools tackle this issue. It was stated that specialists in curriculum areas should share expertise across several schools.

ACTION

More work is needed to understand the nature, level and location of teacher recruitment and retention issues throughout Essex.

Owner: Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning

It was stated that business has a role to play and Local Authorities need to work together to see how business can be supported to fulfil the needs of the local and national economy.

Tendring District Council

Councillor Watling stated Tendring District Council wishes to raise the aspirations of people living in the coastal areas of the district. He had recently visited both the Clacton Coastal Academy and Tendring Technology College and was impressed by the two Headteachers. They are inspiring, and teachers want to work with them. Cllr Watling referred to the paper provided to the Task and Finish Group in advance of the meeting (see Appendix 5).

Keri Lawrence stated Tendring Education Improvement Group (TEIG) had gone a long way to bridging the gap between schools and the District Council with an effective partnership focused on key work streams including School Readiness, Teacher Recruitment and Governor Recruitment. There has been a big drive in Tendring on school governor recruitment and there are a large number of Tendring District Council

officers who are school governors. The District Council also supported the recent launch of the Governor kitemark to give to school governors as a badge of recognition.

Much work is ongoing at Tendring Education Centre with a particular concentration on interventions in Jaywick. Tendring District Council supports the County on school intervention. There is a clustering of primary schools in Clacton which is being done in conjunction with the County and is actively creating partnerships, with schools being encouraged through difficult times. This model is being rolled-out across Tendring.

There are areas of Tendring that have significant deprivation. However, there is a problem with an itinerant population which compounds issues in relation to educational attainment; but, overall, things are improving in the district, it was stated.

There are localities in Tendring which are difficult to access for Children's centres; in particular with regard to transport and infrastructure. However, this is being tackled presently by the Tendring Locality Board. The Family Solutions programme in Tendring has seen some real progress in terms of the development of children.

Perception was highlighted as an issue with regard to an institution gaining a bad name which has a tendency to stick. One of the key challenges is to contest such perceptions.

Essex Primary Headteachers Association (EPHA)

Mike Blant, EPHA Liaison Officer was in attendance to contribute to the review. Mike stated that Essex County Council and the EPHA meet on a regular basis. The EPHA wants to be part of the thinking and the solutions to raising attainment in the county. There is now a much stronger, positive partnership with the County Council to move things ahead together.

It was stated that there had been lost opportunities in the past which led to some schools being in need of improvement. The County Council did lose a lot of its liaison with primary schools because of the loss of School Development Advisers. However, intelligence about all schools is now better which allows the Council to gauge if schools are about to get into difficulty. However, there are, sometimes, mitigating circumstances for some schools which are failing. Schools are complex places and Headteachers are pulled from pillow-to-post on a daily basis, which can affect their capacity to deal with the strategic overview of the school.

Most schools in the primary sector in Essex would be described as small schools. With this in mind the sharing of expertise is critical. School-Led Improvement System is being implemented at present and this is about creating capacity between schools. Most schools are willing to be part of partnerships, with many in several partnerships already. The Local Authority is encouraging schools to consider their natural alignments with other schools to form new clusters and partnerships.

Partnerships such as the Basildon Education Services Trust (BEST), which has been working in Basildon for nearly five years, and the National Education Trust which is working in Harlow have been excellent initiatives in going forward to make improvements for these localities. There is much that can be learned from these partnerships, which have included people from the business sector working with children in Basildon.

The School-Led Improvement Programme is also a good move. The intention is to create cross-phase partnership, allowing the sharing of expertise across schools, benefiting both the primary and secondary sector and easing the transition from Year 6 to 7. Sometimes there is a suspicion from primary schools that secondary schools will overpower them; but this has not been the case.

In terms of recruitment and retention those schools which are seen to be failing are the most difficult to recruit to; yet these are the very schools which require excellent qualified staff. The fluidity of staff within clusters or partnerships allows schools to share resources also. Excellent Headteachers create and motivate staff to stay. However, external support is often needed in supporting schools with a high turnover of staff. The EPFA recognise where weak leadership is apparent within a school.

Initial Teacher Training is now complex and not as straightforward as it used to be. The number of routes into teaching means the quality of teaching does vary. The rigour is sometimes compromised by the calibre of new teachers. There needs to be intervention when a teacher is not achieving as they should and might even be informed that teaching is not the job for them.

Cllr Barker asked whether there is any peer review of infant and primary schools who, the Task and Finish Group have heard, are saying they are receiving children who are not school ready? Cllr Barker continued by stating junior schools are also saying something similar about infant schools; and this is then passed on to secondary schools with regard to primary/junior schools. In response, it was stated that it is difficult to make such an assessment but a level 3 achieved in Year 3 will be somewhat different from a level 3 at KS1, particularly in the way the assessment is carried out.

It was stated that the pre-school years are vital in terms of school readiness. Cllr Barker mentioned that Councillor Sue Lissimore, Cabinet Member Deputy, Education and Lifelong Learning, is currently doing some work on Children's Centres and it was agreed to invite Cllr Lissimore to a future meeting of the Task and Finish Group to make a contribution to the review if that work is completed within timescales..

Cllr Barker asked whether any evidence exists to show that primary schools achieve higher standards than schools with an infant and junior school split? In response it was stated primary schools are in a position to control the levels children are assessed more evenly over time. Therefore, in a way, they can be seen to be achieving better. The view stated was that, on the whole, that primary schools are a better way to set-up 4-11 education, but that there is no way this can be forced upon schools, only encouraged.

Written Submissions

A. Early Years

Essex County Council Commissioning Strategy - Outcome 1: Children in Essex get the Best Start in Life, details the Councils strategic approach.

Children in Essex get the best start in life:

Indicators

- Percentage of children ready for school
- Percentage of children achieving a good level of development by the age of five

People in Essex enjoy good health and wellbeing:

Indicators

- Percentage of children achieving at school

People in Essex have aspirations and achieve their ambitions through education, training and lifelong learning:

Indicators

- Percentage of children attending a good school
- Percentage of children achieving at school (measured at Foundation, KS2 and KS4)

Introduction

Outcomes for pupils aged 5 are determined at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (end of Reception year) using the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP). These profiles summarise and describe a child's attainment at the end of the EYFS and are based on ongoing observation and assessment. The attainment measure used is the percentage of pupils who achieve a 'Good Level of Development'.

In 2013 a new Framework was introduced with pupils being assessed as being emerging (1), expected (2) or exceeding (3) against seventeen Early Learning Goals. A Good Level of Development requires pupils to be at least at the expected level in the three prime areas of learning: communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional development and the early learning goals within the specific areas of learning: literacy and mathematics areas of learning.

Historically Essex has performed below the National average with a national ranking as low as 135th (out of 152 LAs) in 2011. 2012 saw the gap reduce through targeted interventions along with all pupils starting their Reception year in the Autumn term for the first time. Whilst 2013 was not directly comparable with previous years, it was the first time that Essex exceeded the Eastern Region and England averages and achieved its highest ever national ranking of 51st.

2013/ 2014

Essex is still above national in 2014 and the same as the Eastern region but 2 % below statistical neighbours.

Essex County Council Early Years Foundation Stage Profile results have moved from the bottom Quartile in 2011 / 2012 to second quartile in 2013 / 2014 based on the national profile of results.

DfE Statistic First Release, November 2014: Pupils achieving a Good Level of Development

Pupils achieving a Good Level of Development									
		2013				2014			
		Girls	Boys	All	Gap	Girls	Boys	All	Gap
Essex		62	44	53	18	70	53	61	16
Attainment	Statistical Neighbours	62	46	53	16	72	55	63	17
	Eastern Region	60	44	52	16	69	53	61	16
	England	60	44	52	16	69	52	60	16
Essex Rankings	Statistical Neighbours	5	5	5	8	6	6	6	4
	Eastern Region	3	2	2	10	4	3	4	4
	England	47	57	51	116	49	57	57	53

- 61% of Essex pupils achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD) in 2014 – an eight percentage points rise (15% improvement) on 2013 performance. Nationally performance increased from 52% to 60%
- Having seen performance significantly below England averages every year up to and including 2012, for the second consecutive year, Essex pupils achieving a GLD were one percentage point higher than nationally
- Rankings against SN, ER and England comparator groups are broadly similar to 2013. These see Essex maintain its position in the second quartile for boys, girls and all pupils
- Whilst the EYFS framework was very different prior to 2013 meaning actual performance cannot be compared on a like for like basis, national rankings show that as recently as 2011, Essex was ranked 135th and in the bottom quartile
- The gender gap in 2013 exceeded all comparator groups by two percentage points meaning that Essex was ranked 116th nationally. The gap reduced to 16% in 2014 and is now in line with comparators meaning a much improved ranking of 53rd

A detailed analysis has been undertaken in relation to Good Level of Development (GLD) results in Essex. This document creates a detailed narrative for EYFSP results for academic year 2013/2014 that will form an effective baseline for future reference and future comparison. The document considers performance by school, district and quadrant, considers each early learning goal and looks at attainment by pupil characteristics such as gender and ethnicity, EAL, as well as the impact of month of birth on attainment

Summer 2015 will see the last year of the current national GLD, EYFSP results

New Baseline Assessment from September 2015

Changes are now under way for assessment within the EYFS which will start to be implemented from September 2015

The Government are introducing a baseline assessment in reception year, the 'reception baseline', to improve how primary schools' progress is measured

Government-funded schools that wish to use the reception baseline assessment from September 2015 will need to sign up by the end of April 2015, and make decisions about which of the six Government approved providers they will select their baseline assessment from. In 2022 the Government will then use whichever measure shows the most progress: the reception baseline to key stage 2 results OR the key stage 1 results to key stage 2 results.

From September 2016 schools will only be able to use their reception baseline to key stage 2 results to measure progress. If schools choose not to use the reception baseline, from 2023 they will only be held to account by their pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2.

The baseline will score each pupil against the knowledge and understanding typical for children at the start of Reception year. This score will then be used as a basis for accountability throughout primary school. The majority of the content will be linked to the learning and development requirements of communication and language, and the literacy and mathematics areas of learning from the EYFS. The content will be age-appropriate and suitable for the range of children's attainment at the start of Reception. All suppliers are required to undertake in-depth trialling and development to ensure this is the case.

The assessment will be delivered in English and must be administered within the first half term of the child starting either full time or part time in Reception.

The administration will vary, depending on which assessment a school chooses, however the assessment could be tablet, computer or paper-based. Most assessments will be administered by the Reception teaching staff.

Early Education and Childcare provision in Essex

In Essex early years and childcare provision for children 2 – 4 years of age is varied and offered by a mix of maintained, public, private and voluntary providers.

Ofsted Inspection Outcomes for PVI provision.

In Essex 80% of providers of childcare on non-domestic premises were judged to be good or outstanding for overall effectiveness at their most recent inspection, for Childminders 82% of premises were judged to be good or outstanding for overall effectiveness at their most recent inspection.

The table below shows a breakdown of PVI settings across Essex and the most recent Ofsted inspection results in each area. (Figures are accurate as at 12January.2015)

District	Outstanding	Good	RI	Satisfactory	Inadequate	Not inspected	Grand Total	% of Essex
Basildon	11	47	7	7	0	5	77	12%
Braintree	10	42	6	5	2	3	68	11%
Brentwood	7	31	2	3	0	1	44	7%
Castle Point	5	17	3	1	1	3	30	5%
Chelmsford	12	50	7	4	0	4	77	12%
Colchester	21	43	4	5	1	3	77	12%
Epping Forest	4	44	3	10	0	7	68	11%
Harlow	4	25	1	4	1	0	35	5%
Maldon	3	24	0	2	0	2	31	5%
Rochford	3	22	1	3	1	1	31	5%
Tendring	11	31	2	3	1	2	50	8%
Uttlesford	12	30	5	1	0	1	49	8%
Grand Total	103	408	41	48	7	33	640	

Stav Yiannou, Head of Education and Lifelong Learning (EYCC), People Commissioning, Essex County Council

B. Maldon District Council

Reported levels of educational attainment in the Maldon District are of concern to Members of the Maldon District Council. The relatively poor attainment levels (when compared to other parts of Essex) may affect outcomes of young people living within the district. This matter is now being reviewed by the Maldon Locality Board and representatives from Essex County Council and the main two secondary education providers within the district will meet to discuss performance at a future meeting of the Board

Richard Holmes, Director of Customers and Community, Maldon District Council

C. Chelmsford City Council

From the current performance levels of educational attainment reported for the Chelmsford Borough, the City Council currently has no specific concerns it wishes to submit to the Task and Finish Group. However it would welcome appropriate representatives attending a future meeting of the One Chelmsford Board to discuss performance in more detail and to consider further ways the City Council could be engaged in such matters moving forward.

Averil Price, Director of Community Services, Chelmsford City Council

D. Essex Chambers of Commerce

David Burch, Director of Policy, Essex Chambers of Commerce provided a policy paper produced by the British Chambers of Commerce which he would have referred to at a meeting of the Task and Finish Group he was invited to attend but had to cancel. This

policy paper is produced at Appendix 6. The policy paper sets out a range of policies on skills development.

E. Regional Schools Commissioner, East of England and North-East London

Thank you for the early version of a report by the Educational Attainment Task and Finish Group. It is a substantial piece of work that includes a significant volume of both data and analysis.

You asked for any comments. I have one and that is to suggest that the recently published Education and Adoption Bill provides an opportunity for education in Essex to improve further and so meet the ambition set out in this report.

The ambition of the Bill is that all schools are good or outstanding schools. It provides for powers for the Secretary of State to intervene to secure swift action in schools that are not providing children with a high quality of education or supporting them to meet their potential.

Where academies are not providing children with a high quality of education, I am responsible for making clear the need for improvement and taking action where this is not achieved.

The Bill will lead to an expectation that I will speed up the process for addressing maintained schools that are judged inadequate, and extend my powers to 'coasting' schools – those schools which have shown a prolonged period of underperformance and are not supporting their pupils to make the progress they should.

Where a school is judged to be Inadequate, the legislation will mean that I am required to make a directive academy order. Barriers will be removed to ensure progress towards the conversion is as swift as possible. The aim is to remove unhelpful delays in the process to ensure that children benefit from an improved education as soon as possible.

This directive academy order could also be imposed on a coasting school, but I will have the discretion to give these schools the opportunity to demonstrate the capacity to improve first and look to provide support such as by a National Leader in Education.

The legislation will also introduce a new, strengthened warning notice process. This will allow Regional School Commissioners, as well as local authorities, to issue a warning to underperforming schools, and to suggest necessary improvements and a timescale for doing so. If the school fails to comply with that warning notice, the Regional School Commissioner or local authority will be able to take action. These new powers will typically apply to schools *Ofsted* has rated as 'Requires Improvement', but this does not lead to a scenario where all schools judged to require Improvement are automatically eligible for intervention.

In schools where Headteachers have the capacity to improve, that have a credible plan, and are working effectively with their governors to make progress, we want to give them the time to do that.

The parliamentary process will take a few months before any legislation is enacted and the accompanying guidance comes into place.

If the Task and Finish Group were so minded, they could consider adding to their recommendations to:

- encourage each school that is not yet judged good or outstanding to consider the value of joining multi-academy trust with the capacity and capability to ensure it quickly improves to be judged good or outstanding and does not in the future dip back in the standards achieved by its pupils
- encourage the strong schools in Essex themselves to establish multi-academy trusts in order to have local trusts for schools that may in future be required to join a multi-academy trust (rather than the alternative where I would have to bring in a trust less local)
- set the ambition that the improvements in Essex see in the secondary sector are matched in the primary sector

Dr Tim Coulson, Regional Schools Commissioner for the East of England and North East London

Acknowledgements

The Task and Finish Group would wish to thank all those listed on pages 4 and 5 of this report for providing oral and written evidence across nine formal meetings, as well as those who had expressed a willingness to attend sessions but were unable to do so due to other commitments: The Group would also wish to thank the school's they visited as part of the review for their hospitality and willingness to take an active part in this vital scrutiny exercise.

The Task and Finish Group would also like to thank those contributors who commented on the initial draft of this report; and this feedback has been incorporated into this report. The Young Essex Assembly, members of whom contributed to the second session of the Task and Finish Group, has contributed a written response to this report and this is included at Appendix 7.

**Essex County Council
People and Families Scrutiny Committee
Review Scoping Document**

This form is a tool that should be compiled at the start of each inquiry to set out clearly the aims and objectives of the committee's involvement in a particular matter, and will be completed at the end of the inquiry to confirm what has been achieved. The form also provides an audit trail for a review.

Review Topic (Name of review)	EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN ESSEX
Committee	People & Families Scrutiny Committee
Terms of Reference	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To identify the levels and trends in educational attainment in schools in Essex at each Key Stage. 2. To evaluate how the levels of attainment compare nationally. 3. Where underperformance exists, to identify the causes. 4. To identify and evaluate all options to address the causes of underperformance. 5. To understand the barriers to improving school performance. 6. To understand the reduced funding regime including the role of The Schools Forum. 7. To identify how School Governors can influence improving performance. 8. To make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning to support improvement in educational attainment across the county
Lead Member, and membership of Task and Finish Group	<p>Cllr Maggie McEwen (Chairman)</p> <p>Cllr Susan Barker</p> <p>Cllr Keith Bobbin</p> <p>Richard Carson (Independent Member)</p> <p>Cllr Ian Grundy (ex-officio)</p>

Key Officers / Departments	<p>Chris Kiernan, Interim Director of Commissioning Education & Lifelong Learning</p> <p>Clare Kershaw, Head of Commissioning Education & Lifelong Learning</p> <p>Graham Ranby, Head of Commissioning Education & Lifelong Learning</p> <p>Stavroulla Yiannou,, Head of Commissioning Education & Lifelong Learning</p>
Lead Scrutiny Officer	Robert Fox
Relevant Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Ray Gooding, Education and Lifelong Learning
Relevant Corporate Links	To be discussed with key officers of the County Council.
Type of Review	In depth review
Timescales	An update on school performance will be brought to the People & Families Scrutiny Committee in March 2014 and this will be the precursor for the Committee to undertake an in-depth review of educational performance in the county throughout the civic year 2014/15.
Rationale for the Review	<p>Priority 1 in the current ECC Corporate Plan is: <i>Enabling every individual to achieve their ambition by supporting a world-class education and skills offer in the county.</i> There are areas in Essex where school performance at both primary and secondary performance is significantly below standard. The Committee should scrutinise performance in Essex schools; but wider, in the new school world of Academies what is the role of the Local Authority and how can it plan strategically if it has little or no control.</p>

<p>Scope of the Topic</p>	<p>Specify what is to be included/excluded from the review</p> <p><u>Include</u></p> <p>The following is included in the scope of the review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current and historic performance data for all schools in Essex (both primary and secondary) • Educational performance in neighbouring authorities and in statistical neighbour authorities • School estates • Special Educational Needs in relation to the effect on educational attainment • Academies as their own admission authority • Admission requirements for FE/VI Forms • Early Years <p><u>Excluded</u></p> <p>The following falls outside the scope of the review</p>
<p>Key Lines of Enquiry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance data on all schools in Essex • An understanding of past and present arrangements for managing the whole school estate, and the influence of new buildings and facilities on educational attainment • An understanding of any influence the County Council can bring to bear on Academies/Free Schools. How does the Council fund the continuing services? • The role and influence of LA School Governors with regard to school improvement • An understanding of the reduced funding regime • An understanding of statutory requirements • An understanding of partnership working in local education with District/Borough/City Councils • An understanding of the Ofsted inspection regime • How do schools spend the Pupil Premium they receive?
<p>Other Work Being Undertaken</p>	<p>ECC Policy Paper for Education Estates Strategy.</p>

What primary / new evidence is needed for the scrutiny?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School attainment data to be received at the March 2014 meeting of the People & Families Scrutiny Committee • Performance plans that seek to bridge the gap in educational attainment • Oral evidence from the Cabinet Member and senior officers • Support plans for schools in special measures • Details of staff vacancies across schools in the county, particularly in respect of the locations of the vacancies • Information on the capital programme • Plans for schools to increase/reduce admission numbers
What secondary / existing information will be needed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School performance and attainment data • Ofsted reports • Information on the Pupil Premium • Existing legislation and Government reports
What briefings and site visits will be relevant to the review?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request specific briefings and reports from the Cabinet Member and senior officers of the County Council including current strategies, performance data, Ofsted reports etc. • Invite oral and written evidence from others identified in the section below • Commission specific research and consider the findings • Undertake site visits to relevant institutions • Committee meetings held in public session
Who are the witnesses who should be invited to provide evidence for the review?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning • Senior officers from Essex County Council • Headteachers • The Schools Forum • School Governors • Faith and Denominational representatives • Young people through School Councils • Young Essex Assembly • Parents • District/Borough/City Councils • Experts on teaching and learning strategies (Anglia Ruskin University) • Youth Service • Employers

Implications	<p>In terms of topic, have the following matters been taken into consideration in the planning of this review:</p> <p>Legal implications Yes/ no</p> <p>Financial implications Yes/ no</p> <p>Equality and diversity issues..... Yes/ no</p> <p>Other critical implications.....</p>
What resources are required for this review?	<p>In planning the review it is necessary to identify what resources are required to undertake the review, and any costs associated with the committee's activity. Given that the resource available is finite, it is necessary to consider carefully the timing of the review within the Committee's overall work programme.</p>
Indicators of Success	<p>The recommendation of service improvements to improve educational attainment in Essex to assist ECC in meeting Priority 1 of the ECC Corporate Plan .</p> <p>An ongoing role for Members in monitoring and reviewing educational attainment in the county.</p>
Notes	<p>Potentially co-opt representative from the Young Essex Assembly onto the Committee for this review.</p> <p>Hold at least one of the Scrutiny sessions within an educational establishment.</p>
Provisional Timetable	<p>The Task and Finish Group will undertake the in-depth review throughout the civic year 2014/15 with the aim of producing an interim report at the March 2015 meeting of the People & Families Scrutiny Committee. Progress reports will be verbally presented at each Committee meeting.</p>

Audit Trail	
Date review formally proposed	Thursday, 16 January 2014 (Minute no. 7; pages 5 and 6)
Date of Committee's approval of original scoping document	Identify minute number and date of meeting
Date of Committee's approval of Scrutiny Report	Identify minute number and date of meeting
What was the outcome of the review?	Summarise outcome of review and identify if any recommendations have been agreed.
Date proposals arising from review are formally forwarded to the Executive	
How will the outcomes of the review be monitored?	
Date outcomes of review monitored formally by the Committee	Identify minute number and date of meeting

APPENDIX 2

Report to the ECC People & Families Scrutiny Committee, Educational Attainment Task and Finish Group.

Braintree District Educational Attainment Presented by Councillor Graham Butland, Leader of Braintree District Council

Introduction

In the Braintree District there are approximately 21,000 school age children making up around 14% of the overall population. Education has increasingly become an area where the Braintree District is underperforming compared to our neighbours across Essex. This report sets out the key areas where improvement is needed and highlights some of the possible longer term impacts that poor educational attainment could have on the Braintree District and wider community.

Schools

There are 63 state funded schools in the Braintree District including; 2 Special Schools, 12 Infants & Junior Schools, 41 Primary Schools and 8 Secondary Schools. There are also 3 independent schools offering private primary, secondary and special education provision (*These have been excluded from comparisons due to a lack of comparable data*).

As of February 2015 Ofsted ratings for schools in the Braintree District were as follows:

Primary (incl. Infant & Junior)	Secondary	Special Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6 rated as "Outstanding"• 35 rated as "Good"• 10 rated as "Requires Improvement"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 rated as "Good"• 1 rated as "Requires improvement"• 2 rated as "Inadequate"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 rated as "Good"

GCSE Attainment

Compared to other Districts and Boroughs, the Braintree District has the lowest GCSE attainment rate in Essex, a trend which has been ongoing for several years.

- In 2014 50.3% of students achieved 5+ GCSEs at grades A*-C including English and mathematics. (*This includes results for those students who attend school in another local authority area but live in the Braintree District*).
- 2014 results were 6.5% below the average for England, 6.2% below the average for Essex, and 16.2% below the best performing Districts and Boroughs in Essex.

For the eight secondary schools within the District:

- The combined average GCSE attainment rate (for students achieving 5+ GCSEs at grades A*-C including English and mathematics) was 47.4%. *This 2.9% lower than the District total including all students who live in the District.*
- One school scored above the average for England and Essex, whilst all others scored below. The highest achieving school scored 63% whilst the lowest scored 38%.
- Two schools increased their GCSE attainment rates compared to the previous year, whilst all others had reductions of between 2% and 15%.

Early Years foundation Stage Profile

The EYFS Profile assesses children's development at age 5 based on prime and specific areas of learning, with assessments undertaken through classroom and playground observation. In 2014 the Braintree District had the lowest levels of children achieving a "Good Level of Development" (GLD) in the Essex County Council area. In more detail:

- 57.1% of students achieved GLD. This was:
 - 2.9% less than the England average of 60%
 - 3.1% less than ECC average of 61%.
 - 9.9% less than the highest achieving District (Maldon)
- 23 out of the 47 infant and primary schools in the District (49%) achieved less than the England average of 60%

Both data from student observation scores and feedback from Link-Head Teachers for the District highlighted that children's language and communication skills were an area requiring improvement and potential barrier for children's learning later in school.

Key Stage 2

At key stage 2 students are assessed for progress on Reading, Writing and Maths, with performance benchmarked against the number of students achieving Level 4 or above in all three areas. The average for the Braintree District is line with the national and county average of 79% however:

- 20 of 47 schools scored below the average for Essex
- The District was ranked joint 6th out of 12 Districts and Boroughs for Essex.

Issues Affecting the Braintree District

1. Education

Despite the majority of schools receiving positive Ofsted reports, those schools with poor Ofsted ratings significantly underperform, delivering results far below what would be expected for an area with otherwise low levels of deprivation and unemployment. More is needed to help improve standards and performance at all key stages.

2. Growth

As well as the impact on the life chances of individuals, low levels of educational attainment could have long term impacts on the development of the local area. In particular; Braintree District Council is currently working on a new Local Plan which will set out future sustainable development including an anticipated 14,000 new homes and 20,000 jobs required in the District. Poor educational attainment could impact on this process in the following ways:

- *Preventing Inward Investment*
Future inward investment is likely to be in higher skilled industries and is particularly important in District's like Braintree where proximity to Stansted Airport, Cambridge etc. is a potential asset. Potential investors could be put off by low educational attainment and the overall skill level of the economically active population.
- *Restricting Growth of Existing Businesses*
The Braintree District is also reliant upon the growth of our existing businesses to deliver the majority of jobs growth for the future. Employers will need to access a labour market that has

the skills to perform the jobs that they are creating. Employers may struggle to attract new skilled workers into the District if the education available to their children is not at a decent standard.

- *Impact on new schools and teacher recruitment*

If the District has a reputation for poor education, we may not attract the necessary teachers to be employed within the new schools being built. This could lead to overcrowding of existing school facilities, thus creating greater pressure for teachers and driving down standards. *In order to help address recruitment issues Braintree District Council would also like to know to what extent teacher recruitment is affected by affordable housing and to whether we should be considering including key worker housing for teachers in the new local plan?*

3. *Health*

According to the 2014 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment “The general level of educational attainment within a population is closely associated with the overall health of that population. The long-term demographic and health problems for a child born into a family with traditionally low standards of educational attainment may be severe, affecting health choice behaviour and service provision uptake into adulthood.”

An Overview of 2014 Educational Achievement in Essex

March 2015

Produced by:

Education & Lifelong Learning
Organisational Intelligence and
Commissioning Delivery



Essex County Council

Contents

Executive summary	64
Guide to this report	65
Background	65
Essex headlines	65
Results	65
Interpreting the pupil attainment tables.....	65
Essex context	67
Comparative summary of attainment	69
Background	70
Essex headlines	70
Summary of OfSTED grades for Essex schools.....	71
Early Years Foundation Stage	72
Background	72
Essex headlines	72
Results	73
Phonics Checks (Years 1 and 2)	74
Background	74
Essex headlines	74
Results	75
Key Stage 1	76
Background	76
Essex Headlines	76
Results	77
Key Stage 2	79
Background	79
Essex headlines	79
Results	83
Key Stage 4	84
Background	84

Essex Headlines	84
Results	86
Key Stage 5	89
Background	89
Headlines	89
Results	90
Young People not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs)	91
Background	91
Essex headlines	91
Results	91
Attendance	92
Background	92
Headlines	92
Results	93
Performance of particular pupil groups	94
Background	94
Gender	94
Ethnic heritage	94
First language	94
Free school meals/Disadvantaged	94
Special Educational Needs	95
Description of pupil groups used in this report	97
Pupil group definitions	97
Additional data annex	98
Early Years Foundation Stage	98
Key Stage 1	98
Key Stage 2	100
Key Stage 4	101

Executive summary

There were nearly 200,000 children in over 550 schools in Essex 2014

Although there are regional variations, overall, Essex pupils had lower than national rates of free school meals, children from ethnic minorities, and pupils not speaking English as a first language. Although Essex also has lower overall rates of SEN pupils, the proportion of statements is comparatively high (**see page 7**).

There were slightly lower than national rates of good or outstanding schools

Many schools in Essex are rated good or outstanding by OfSTED, but overall the proportions of such schools were lower than national averages in 2014. The ratings of more recently inspected schools are encouraging (**see pages 9 and 10**).

Early years attainment is slightly above the national average

The increase in percentage of children with a good level of development tracked the national changes so that Essex's rank position remained in the 2nd quartile overall (**see pages 11 and 12**).

Attainment in phonics improved to national average levels

The proportion of pupils meeting the expected phonics standard reached the national average for the first time in 2014 (**see pages 13 and 14**).

Attainment at key stage 1 remains close to the national average

Small improvements in overall attainment mean that Essex is ranked in the second or third quartile nationally, depending on subject (**see pages 15 and 16**).

Attainment at key stage 2 rose faster than national rates

Improvements in attainment in all subjects meant that Essex had the highest rank position compared to other local authorities in the last three years, although remaining in the 3rd quartile (**see pages 17 to 20**).

Essex remains in the third quartile at key stage 4

Changes in counting methodology make 2014 results impossible to compare to previous years. However, Essex maintained its national rank position in the 3rd quartile (**see pages 21 to 24**).

Key stage 5 attainment remains in top quartile

On several core measures Essex has been in the top quartile at Key stage 5 for the last three years (**see pages 25 and 26**).

The percentage of NEETS continues to fall

The percentage of young people not in employment, education or training is at its lowest level for the last three years, as is the percentage whose destination is unknown

(see page 27).

Absence rates remained similar to previous years

Absence rates in Essex place the county in the third quartile (primary schools) or fourth quartile (secondary schools) nationally, although there is some recent evidence that absence rates are decreasing (see pages 28 and 29).

Guide to this report

The chapters on attainment and progression have three sections: background, Essex headlines and results:

Background

Provides a short description of the types of assessments at each Key stage (tests and/or teacher assessments and which subjects are assessed).

Essex headlines

Main headline describing a key aspect of attainment, progress or context

A few paragraphs of more detailed information to support the main headline.

Results

A more detailed breakdown of attainment, progress or context data, comparing Essex with other local authorities and national results. The performance of specific pupil groups is also presented, where appropriate.

Key comparator groups	EYFSP measure:	Essex's national rank position (out of 152 local authorities)			
		% GLD		% Inequality gap	
		2013	2014	2013	2014
Essex (national rank)		53% (51)	61% (57)	33.2% (104)	31.0% (53)
Statistical neighbours		53%	63%	31.5%	29.8%
Eastern region		52%	61%	34.7%	32.2%
England		52%	60%	36.6%	33.9%

Actual performance outcomes

Interpreting the pupil attainment tables

The tables on pupil group attainment (starting on page 34) have some cells highlighted pink or green. The shading has been added when the difference in attainment (or progress) between a particular pupil group and the equivalent national figure for that group are unlikely to have arisen by 'chance' – specifically when there is a less than 1 in 20 likelihood that the difference is due to chance (i.e. the difference is *statistically significant*):

 Difference is noticeably higher

	Difference is not unusual
	Difference is noticeably lower

EXAMPLE: The attainment of Asian pupils in reading, writing and maths at Key stage 2 in Essex (88%) was 'noticeably' higher than the attainment of Asian pupils in reading nationally (80%), and so the cell is shaded green. On the other hand, pupils who do not speak English as a first language performed noticeably less well than similar pupils nationally (81% compared to 84%) and so that cell is shaded red.

Pupil groups & Level 4+		R, W & M		Reading		Writing		Maths		Essex cohort 2014
		England	Essex	England	Essex	England	Essex	England	Essex	
Ethnic heritage	Mixed	80%	83%	90%	92%	87%	90%	86%	86%	527
	Asian	80%	88%	89%	93%	87%	90%	87%	91%	280
	Black	77%	79%	88%	89%	85%	87%	84%	84%	303
First language	English	79%	79%	89%	90%	86%	86%	86%	87%	13,823
	Not English	77%	75%	86%	84%	84%	81%	86%	85%	788
Disadvantaged	Disad	67%	66%	82%	82%	77%	74%	78%	77%	1,813

Green shading: Asian pupils in Essex schools perform well compared to Asian pupils nationally

No shading: The difference in attainment is not unusual given the number of pupils

Red shading: Pupils who do not speak English as a first language perform noticeably less well than similar pupils nationally

How to interpret this? Firstly, note that the column on the far right of the table shows the cohort size for the Asian pupil group in Essex is 280. Now imagine repeatedly selecting 280 pupils at random from the entire national cohort of Asian pupils and, each time, calculating the percentage of your selection that obtained a level 2+ in reading, writing and maths. Most of the groups chosen would have average levels of attainment close to the national average of 80%, but some would have higher or lower values.

If the average score for a selected group of 280 pupils occurs less than 1 in 20 times in this process of repeated sampling then it is classed as 'statistically significantly' different from the national average, and is shaded either green or pink depending on whether it is above or below the national average for that group.

Attainment and progress data is presented for the key pupil groups of gender, ethnic heritage, first language spoken, entitlement to free school meals (or, at Key stages 2 and 4, disadvantaged pupils) and special educational needs.

A more detailed description of these pupil groups is provided on page 33.

Essex context

There were almost 200,000 pupils in Essex in 2014, attending 552 schools

By school type, the numbers were:

- 110,955 children in 457 primary schools
- 84,705 children in 78 secondary schools, and
- 2,197 children in 17 special schools.

There were lower than national levels of children entitled to free school meals...

14% of Essex primary school pupils were entitled to free school meals compared to 18% nationally. For secondary school pupils the figures were 10% for Essex and 15% nationally and for special schools 29% Essex and 37% nationally. These figures are slightly lower than in 2013.

...lower proportions of pupils from ethnic minorities...

The proportion of children from ethnic minority groups was less than half the national rate both in primary and secondary schools. Although the proportion of ethnic minority pupils increased between 2013 and 2014, the increase was less than that seen national.

...and of pupils who speak English as an additional language

There was a slight increase in the proportion of children who speak English as an additional language, but the overall rates are still only around one third of national levels.

The proportion of children with special educational needs fell

There was also a decrease in SEN pupils nationally, but the fall in Essex was larger both in primary and secondary schools. Essex schools also have lower than national average levels of pupils with SEN in both primary and secondary phases. However the proportion of pupils with statements is noticeably high (3.3%) compared to national rates (2.8%).



































































Table 1: The percentage of pupils in key pupil groups by school type, Essex vs. England, January 2014 and 2013.

Percentage of pupils in key pupil groups January 2014 (2013 in brackets)					
Pupil group	Phase	England		Essex	
		2013	2014	2013	2014
Entitled to free school meals	Primary	18.1%	17.0%	13.6%	12.8%
	Secondary	15.1%	14.6%	10.1%	10.0%
	Special	36.7%	37.2%	29.2%	29.3%
Ethnic minority (i.e. non-White British)	Primary	28.5%	29.5%	13.3%	14.0%
	Secondary	24.2%	25.3%	11.6%	12.4%
	Special	23.9%	24.7%	13.6%	13.8%
Speak English as an	Primary	18.2%	18.7%	5.9%	6.1%

additional language	Secondary	13.9%	14.3%	4.3%	4.4%
	Special	12.9%	13.2%	3.8%	3.7%
Having Special educational needs	Primary	17.4%	16.6%	16.2%	15.4%
	Secondary	19.0%	17.8%	16.1%	14.6%

Comparative summary of attainment

Table 2: Overview of the relative performance of Essex against average performance of statistical neighbours, Eastern region and England state-funded schools

2014 results – how does Essex compare					
	Measure	Essex	Essex compared with:		
			Statistical neighbours	Eastern region	England
EYFS	Good level of development	61%			
Phonics	Working at required level	74%			
Key Stage 1	Level 2+ - Reading	91%			
	Level 2+ - Writing	86%			
	Level 2+ - Maths	93%			
Key Stage 2	Level 4+ - Reading	89%			
	Level 4+ - Writing	85%			
	Level 4+ - Maths	87%			
	Level 4+ R,W and M	79%			
	Expected progress KS1-2 - Reading	91%			
	Expected progress KS1-2 - Writing	92%			
	Expected progress KS1-2 - Maths	89%			
Key Stage 4	5+ A*-C incl. English and Maths	56.5%			
	5+A*-C	64.7%			
	5A*-G incl. English and Maths	91.7%			
	English Baccalaureate	19.9%			
	Expected progress KS2-4 - English	72.8%			
	Expected progress KS2-4 - Maths	65.5%			
Key Stage 5 (state-funded schools)	Points per student	821.7			
	Points per entry	216.2			
	3+ A grades	12.0%			
	AAB grades or better	18.6%			



- Essex performance is lower
- Essex performance is the same
- Essex performance is higher

Summary of OfSTED inspections

Background

New frameworks introduced in September 2012 brought a focus on four key areas for school inspections: pupil achievement, teaching quality, the effectiveness of leadership and management; and the standards of behaviour and safety. The differences between the pre and post 2012 inspection frameworks are shown in table 3:

Table 3: Rating comparisons between the pre and post 2012 inspection framework

Pre September 2012	Post September 2012
1 Outstanding	1 Outstanding
2 Good	2 Good (minimum acceptable standard)
3 Satisfactory	3 Requires improvement
4 Inadequate	4 Inadequate with two categories of concern: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special measures: one of more key areas is inadequate, but where leadership and management is graded at level 3 or better • Serious weaknesses: a school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education, and the leaders/managers/governors do not demonstrate the capacity for improvement.

All local and national statistics in the commentary below and in the subsequent chart describe the situation on the 31st August 2014 (i.e. the final day in the 2013/14 school year). There are two sets of figures – the proportion of Essex schools with a specific OfSTED rating and the proportion of children attending schools with a specific OfSTED rating.

Essex headlines

Overall, Essex had a slightly lower proportion of schools rated good or outstanding compared to national levels

74% of maintained schools and academies in Essex were rated good or outstanding at the end of 2013/14, an increase of 3 percentage points compared to the previous year. Nationally, 81% of schools were good or outstanding (compared to 78% in the previous year).

Three out of every four Essex pupils attended a good or outstanding maintained primary or academy school...

74% of pupils in Essex maintained primary schools and academies attended a good or outstanding school at the end of 2013/14. Nationally the equivalent figure was 81%, giving Essex a rank position of 120th out of 152 local authorities.

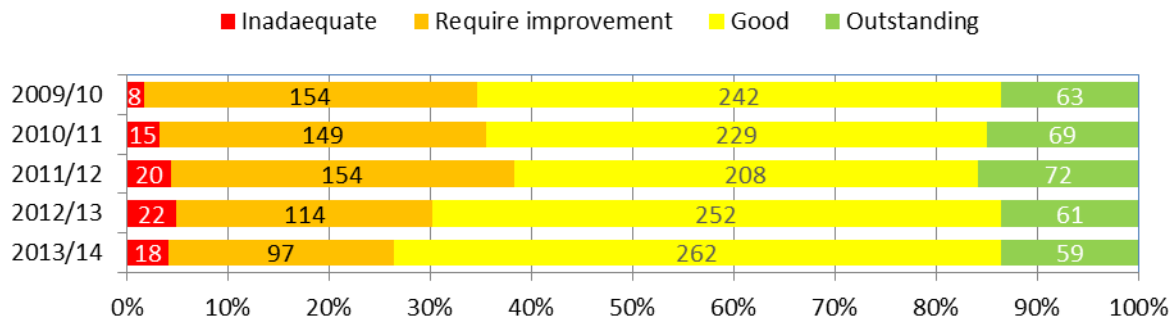
...and similarly for pupils in Essex maintained secondary schools and academies

74% of pupils in Essex maintained secondary schools and academies attended a good or outstanding school at the end of 2013/14. Nationally the equivalent figure was also 74%, giving Essex a rank position of 81st out of 152 local

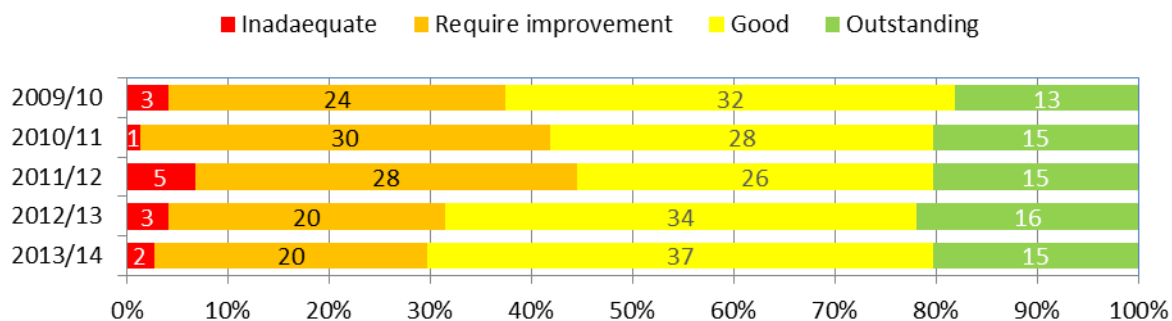
	authorities.
Essex has a slightly lower than national proportion of schools rated good or outstanding at all phases	74% of primary schools, 70% of secondary schools, and 89% of special schools in Essex were judged to be good or outstanding. Nationally 81% of primary schools, 70% of secondary schools and 90% of special schools were judged to be good or outstanding.
There was a decrease in the number of schools judged inadequate	21 maintained schools and academies were judged to be inadequate (18 primary (4%), 2 secondary (3%) and 1 special school (6%)). At the same point in 2013, 25 schools were rated inadequate. Nationally 2% of primary schools, 6% of secondary schools and 2% of special schools were judged to be inadequate in 2014.
The results of inspections during the autumn term 2014 are encouraging	Of the 33 primary schools inspected during this period, 81.2% were rated good or outstanding. Only 6 secondary schools were inspected, but 4 (67%) were rated good or outstanding.

Summary of OfSTED grades for Essex schools

Numbers of Essex Primary Schools by OfSTED Grade (Overall Effectiveness)



Numbers of Essex Secondary Schools by OfSTED Grade (Overall Effectiveness)



Early Years Foundation Stage

Background

Outcomes for pupils aged 5, at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception class) are assessed using the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP). The assessments are carried out by the children's teacher; schools and settings are moderated by the Local Authority.

The two measures reported here were introduced in 2013 as part of a wider review of the EYFSP assessment system. This means that EYFSP data from earlier years cannot be compared:

1. *Attainment*: the percentage of pupils who achieve a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD). Pupils are assessed as either 'emerging' (1 point), 'expected' (2 points) or 'exceeding' (3 points) against seventeen Early Learning Goals. A 'Good Level of Development' requires pupils to be at least at the expected level in the three 'prime areas of learning', namely communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional development and the early learning goals within the literacy and maths areas of learning.
2. *Inequality*: the gap between the lowest attaining 20% of children and the mean average of all children.

Essex headlines

The percentage achieving a good level of development has increased...

61% of children achieved a good level of development. This is an increase of 8 percentage points compared with the 2013 figure of 53% and is in line with the national increase.

70% of girls achieved a good level of development, a rise of 8 percentage points from 62% in 2013.

The proportion of boys achieving a good level of development also increased in 2014 to 53%, up 9 percentage points from 44% in 2013.

...and the inequalities gap is narrowing

In 2014, the inequalities gap (the achievement gap between the lowest attaining 20% of children and the mean average) was 31.0%. The achievement gap has narrowed by 2.2 percentage points from 33.2% in 2013. This improvement resulted in a large jump in national ranking for Essex, from 194 to 53.

There was a small reduction in the gender attainment gap

The gap between the percentage of girls and boys achieving a good level of development reduced by 1 percentage point, having been 18% in 2013 (girls 62% v boys 44%), and 17% in 2014 (girls 70% v boys 53%).

Increase in FSM pupils' attainment, but widening of the gap

The proportion of FSM pupils achieving a GLD has increased from 35% in 2013 to 43% in 2014. However, the gap in attainment between FSM and non-FSP pupils

increased slightly from 20 to 21 percentage points between 2013 and 2014.

The SEN attainment gap widened slightly. Pupils with SEN but no statement performed poorly

The gap between children with a special educational need (SEN) and those with no identified SEN has increased from 41 to 48 percentage points in 2014. A noticeably low proportion (18%) of SEN pupils achieved a GLD (21% nationally) compared with 66% of those pupils with no identified SEN, a gap of 48 percentage points. Nationally this gap was 45 percentage points.

Essex was ranked 57th out of 152 local authorities nationally

Maintaining higher than England performance in 2014 sees Essex ranked 57th and in the 2nd quartile. An additional 497 pupils would have been required to achieve a GLD to reach the top quartile threshold of 64%.

There was an 11 percentage point variation between districts

Maldon was the highest performing district with 68% of pupils achieving a GLD. Braintree was the lowest with 57%.

Results

Table 4: EYFSP attainment and inequality gap measures, Essex compared with geographical and statistical comparators, 2013 and 2014

EYFSP measure:	% GLD		% Inequality gap	
	2013	2014	2013	2014
Essex (national rank)	53% (51)	61% (57)	33.2% (104)	31.0% (53)
Statistical neighbours	53%	63%	31.5%	29.8%
Eastern region	52%	61%	34.7%	32.2%
England	52%	60%	36.6%	33.9%

Phonics Checks (Years 1 and 2)

Background

The phonics screening check indicates whether children have achieved a basic proficiency in identifying essential word structures; it was introduced in 2012 as a statutory assessment for all children in year 1 (typically aged 6). Those pupils who do not meet the standard in year 1 or who were not tested are re-checked at the end of year 2 (typically aged 7). Pupils meet the required standard of phonic decoding if they score 32 or more out of a possible 40 in the test.

Essex headlines

There was a further increase in the percentage of year 1 pupils (age 6) who met the expected standard in phonics

74% of year 1 pupils met the expected standard of phonic decoding in 2014, compared with 67% in 2013 and 54% in 2012.

This brings Essex in line with the national average for the first time.

Essex's rank position roughly in the middle of all local authorities

In 2014 Essex was ranked 74th out of 152 Local Authorities, an improvement from the 2013 rank of 97th. In order for us to have been in the top quartile, an additional 326 pupils would have needed to have been working at the required level.

There was a 13 percentage point difference between the highest and lowest attaining districts

Uttlesford becomes the first district with over 80% of pupils working at the required level since the introduction of the Phonics checks in 2012. At 81% Uttlesford is the highest performing district with Harlow the lowest on 68%.

Increase in the percentage of pupils who met the expected standard by the end of year 2 (age 7)

88% of pupils met the expected standard of phonic decoding by the end of year 2, an increase of 5 percentage points from 85% in 2013.

This includes the proportion reaching the expected standard in year 1 in 2013 and those retaking or taking the test for the first time in 2014.

Results

Table 5: The percentage of pupils working at the required level, Essex vs. statistical, geographical and national comparators. Note that there were no year 2 re-takes in 2012 because the assessments were introduced that year.

% working at the required level	Year 1 phonics			Year 2 phonics (re-takes)	
	2012	2013	2014	2013	2014
Essex (national rank)	54% (117)	67% (97)	74% (74)	83%	88%
Statistical neighbours	58%	70%	75%	87%	88%
Eastern region	55%	67%	73%	84%	88%
England	58%	69%	74%	85%	88%

Key Stage 1

Background

Assessments at the end of key stage 1 are made by teachers in order to measure pupil attainment against the levels set by the national curriculum. The national curriculum standards have been designed so that by the end of key stage 1 pupils are expected to reach level 2 or above.

Level 2b (sometimes referred to as a 'good level 2') refers to an assessment that a child has securely met the level 2 criteria.

Essex Headlines

Attainment at the end of key stage 1 has risen in reading and writing at level 2 or above ...

The percentage of pupils achieving level 2 or above in each of reading and writing increased by 1 percentage point in 2014 to 91% and 86% respectively. This means that roughly 150 more pupils reached the expected standard. Attainment in maths remained unchanged at 93%.

Attainment in all three subjects remained at or above the England average for the third consecutive year.

... and also at level 3 or above

The percentage of pupils achieving level 3 or above in reading increased by 1 percentage point in reading, writing and maths, so that Essex was 2 percentage points above the England average in all three subjects.

Nationally, Essex was ranked in the second quartile for reading and maths and the third quartile for writing

The rank position for level 2 or above in reading, writing and maths was 26, 66 and 34 respectively.

In reading and maths Essex was positioned at the very top of second quartile performance. Writing was 2 percentage points below the top quartile threshold, and an additional 317 pupils would have needed to achieve level 2 for Essex to reach the top quartile.

Girls continue to outperform boys at level 2 or above in all subjects

The largest gender difference is in writing, where the gap is 9 percentage points (no change from 2013) – the same as national.

Gender gaps for the other subjects are also unchanged from 2013 – 7 percentage points in reading and 2 percentage points in maths.

Brentwood district had the highest levels of attainment in all subjects

Brentwood is the highest performing district in reading, writing and maths (87%, 77% and 87% respectively at level 2b or above).

Tendring and Harlow are the lowest performing districts

(76% and 70% respectively in reading, 64% and 65% in writing and both achieving 76% for maths – all measured at level 2b or above).

Asian pupils performed well in writing and white pupils in reading and maths

92% of Asian pupils achieved the expected level in writing, 4 percentage points ahead of Asian pupils nationally.

White pupils performed above the equivalent national average by 1 percentage point in reading and maths (91% and 93% respectively).

Reading and writing had the largest first language attainment gap

The largest attainment gap between children who do not speak English as a first language and their peers was in reading and writing (4 percentage points). Both the attainment gap and the level of attainment were identical with the equivalent national percentages.

The attainment gaps for FSM pupils are similar to those seen nationally

The largest gap was in writing (14 percentage points) and the smallest in maths (8 percentage points). Attainment gaps in all three subjects in Essex were very similar to the gaps nationally.

SEN attainment gaps are widest in writing and reading

The SEN attainment gap is widest in writing with 50% of pupils with SEN achieving the expected level compared with 95% of pupils with no identified SEN, an attainment gap of 45 percentage points. The national attainment gap is 40 percentage points.

In reading the gap is 34 percentage points with 63% of pupils with SEN achieving the expected level compared with 97% of pupils with no identified SEN.

The attainment gap in maths was much smaller at 24 percentage points and is similar to the gap nationally.

Results

Table 6: Level 2b+

% Level 2b+	Reading			Writing			Maths		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
Essex (national rank)	77% (46)	80% (45)	81% (56)	64% (63)	68% (55)	69% (79)	77% (53)	80% (37)	81% (44)
Statistical neighbours	78%	81%	83%	67%	70%	72%	78%	81%	82%
Eastern region	77%	80%	81%	66%	69%	71%	77%	79%	81%

England	76%	79%	81%	64%	67%	70%	76%	78%	80%
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Key Stage 2

Background

All pupils in state-funded schools must be assessed against the standards of the national curriculum at the end of key stage 2 (age 11).

In 2014 there were statutory externally marked national tests in reading, maths and grammar, punctuation and spelling. In addition to the standard tests for national curriculum levels 3 to 5, externally marked level 6 tests were available for more able pupils.

Schools must also provide teacher assessments for English, reading, writing, maths and science.

Pupils at the end of key stage 2 are expected to achieve level 4 and to have made at least two levels of progress between key stages 1 and 2.

In 2014, schools were deemed to be underperforming if their performance is below the 'floor standard'. A school is below the minimum expected level if:

- Fewer than 65% of pupils are achieving level 4 or above in all of reading, writing and maths (this threshold was 60% in 2013); and
- The proportion of children making two levels of progress in reading, writing and maths are all below the median level for all state-funded mainstream schools (the median values in 2014 were: reading 94%, writing 96% and maths 93% - all higher than in 2013).

Essex headlines

Attainment rose in all subject areas...

Reading and maths had the largest increases, both up 3 percentage points over 2013 results, to 89% and 87% respectively. The improvement in writing was slightly smaller at 2 percentage points.

The improvement of 3 percentage points in maths was particularly noticeable as nationally attainment only improved by 1 percentage point to 86%.

...which led to an improvement in the attainment in reading, writing and maths combined...

79% of pupils achieved a level 4 or above in all of reading, writing and maths, compared to 75% in 2013.

This improvement means that over 900 more pupils achieved a level 4+ in reading, writing and maths in 2014 compared to 2013.

...giving Essex the best rank position compared with other local authorities in the last three years

The rank position for reading, writing and maths was 64, 81 and 53 respectively. In the combined reading, writing and maths measure Essex was ranked 69th.

In order to reach the top quartile, around 400 more pupils would need to have achieved a level 4+ in reading, writing and maths.

Attainment in reading and writing was at national levels whilst maths was slightly higher

The percentage of children achieving the expected level in reading and writing was 89 and 85% respectively – the same as national levels.

Attainment in maths was 87% - 1 percentage point above the national average. This equates to an additional 150 or so pupils in Essex reaching the expected level of attainment.

There was a 15 percentage point variation in attainment between districts on the overall reading, writing and maths measure

The highest attaining district for the percentage of children achieving a level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths was Uttlesford (88%), and the lowest was Tendring (73%).

There was an increase in the proportion of pupils making expected progress

The percentage of pupils making expected progress has increased by 5 percentage points to 91% in reading, by 3 percentage points to 89% in maths, and by 2 percentage points in writing to 92%.

This equates to roughly 700 additional pupils making expected progress in reading, for example, compared with 2013.

19 schools are below the primary school floor standard

This represents 5% of state-funded mainstream schools in Essex.

This is below the 2013 figure of 30 schools (9%); however the figures are not comparable as the attainment threshold increased from 60% in 2013 to 65% in 2014. 9 schools (3%) would have been below the floor if the threshold had not changed.

Attainment in LA maintained schools and sponsored academies was close to national equivalents, but converter academies performed better

This pattern can be seen across attainment *and* progress measures. For example, converter academies were 4 percentage points higher for the proportion of children achieving level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths compared to converters nationally (87% compared to 83%).

Progress in maths in sponsored academies was 4 percentage points lower than national equivalent levels (82% vs. 85%).

Girls continue to perform better than boys in reading and

82% of girls achieved level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths, compared to 76% of boys – the same as the gender gap nationally.

writing. There is no gender gap in maths

The largest gap between boys and girls is in writing. At 9 percentage points, this is equivalent to the gap nationally (boys 81% and girls 90%, locally and nationally).

Boys in Essex schools performed well compared to their counterparts nationally in reading and maths.

Disadvantaged pupils had lower attainment and made less progress than similar pupils nationally

The attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Essex was lower than similar pupils nationally, especially in maths, where only 74% attainment level 4 compared to 77% nationally. However, the gap of 17 percentage points between disadvantaged pupils and their peers was the same as the gap nationally.

Asian pupils had noticeably high levels of attainment in all subjects

Although the number of Asian pupils is relatively small (the cohort in 2014 was 280 pupils), their attainment was noticeably higher than Asian pupils nationally, especially in the combined reading, writing and maths measure (8 percentage points higher).

The gap between pupils who do not speak English as a first language and their peers is larger in Essex than nationally across all subjects

The attainment gap is largest in reading (6 percentage points) and writing (5 percentage points) and smallest in maths (2 percentage points). The overall effect is a 4 percentage point gap in the combined reading, writing and maths measure of 4 percentage points – double the national gap.

The attainment of pupils who do not speak English as a first language is noticeably lower than similar pupils nationally in writing – 81% in Essex vs. 84% nationally.

Pupils with SEN but no statement perform noticeably less well in several measures than similar pupils nationally

There was noticeably lower comparative performance in reading and writing, resulting in a 4 percentage point gap in the combined reading, writing and maths measure (42% nationally for pupils with SEN but no statements compared to 38% in Essex).

These pupils also made noticeably less progress between key stages 1 and 2 than the same group nationally in all of reading, writing and maths.

Progress between key stages 1 and 2 was generally in line with national rates except for writing, where it was

Overall, the percentage of pupils making expected levels of progress in reading and maths was equal to national rates (91% and 89% respectively) but was lower in writing (92% in Essex and 93% nationally).

low

Performance at several Essex schools was good enough for them to receive ministerial letters of congratulation for attainment or progress

-
- Radwinter CofE VA Primary school was congratulated because 100% of the pupils achieved a Level 4b or above and make the expected progress (or better) between Key stages 1 and 2;
 - Holy Cross Catholic Primary school in Harlow and Roach Vale Primary school showed the 'most sustained improvement' (awarded for the most year on year improvement in each year between 2012 and 2014 in the level 4 or above attainment in reading, writing and maths measure');
 - Elm Hall school was congratulated for the very high value-added (progress) of pupils

Results

Table 7: The percentage of pupils attaining Level 4+ at key stage 2

% Level 4+	Reading			Writing (TA)			Maths			R,W,M		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
Essex (national rank)	87% (65)	86% (73)	89% (64)	81% (80)	83% (87)	85% (81)	84% (75)	84% (94)	87% (53)	74% (82)	75% (90)	79% (69)
Statistical neighbours	87%	86%	89%	81%	83%	86%	84%	83%	86%	74%	74%	79%
Eastern region	86%	85%	88%	81%	83%	85%	83%	83%	85%	73%	74%	77%
England	87%	86%	89%	81%	83%	85%	84%	85%	86%	75%	76%	79%

Table 8: The percentage of pupils making expected progress between key stages 1 and 2

% expected progress	Reading			Writing			Maths		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
Essex (national rank)	88% (110)	86% (124)	91% (78)	89% (110)	90% (116)	92% (115)	86% (97)	86% (119)	89% (95)
Statistical neighbours	88%	87% %	90%	88%	90%	92%	85%	85%	88%
Eastern region	88%	86%	90%	88%	90%	92%	85%	85%	87%
England	90%	88%	91%	90%	92%	93%	87%	88%	90%

Table 9: Key stage 2 attainment by LA maintained and academy schools

	R,W & M Level 4+		R,W & M Level 5+		Reading progress		Writing progress		Maths progress	
	Englan d	Essex	Englan d	Essex	Englan d	Essex	Englan d	Essex	Englan d	Essex
LA maintained	79%	78%	24%	23%	92%	90%	94%	92%	90%	89%
Sponsored academies	68%	69%	13%	11%	87%	86%	91%	91%	86%	82%
Converter academies	83%	87%	26%	30%	93%	93%	95%	95%	91%	92%

Key Stage 4

Background

Pupils are assessed the end of key stage 4 (aged 16) through external GCSE exams and vocational courses. Before 2014, measures allowed for 'GCSEs or equivalences' but in 2014 there were several changes to the counting methodology which are summarised below.

Two major reforms have been implemented which affect the calculation of key stage 4 (KS4) performance measures in 2014:

1. Professor Alison Wolf's Review of Vocational Education recommendations which:
 - restrict the qualifications counted
 - prevent any qualification from counting as larger than one GCSE
 - cap the number of non-GCSEs included in performance measures at two per pupil
2. An early entry policy to only count a pupil's first attempt at a qualification.

These changes mean that it is not possible to make direct comparisons between 2013/14 and earlier years.

Essex Headlines

Attainment on core GCSE measures remains close to national average

Despite changes to GCSE assessment in 2014 (see box above) the proportion of children achieving 5 or more good GCSEs (including English and maths) in Essex schools was 0.3 percentage points below national average - the same as in 2013.

The changes to counting methodology pulled results down locally and nationally

The net result of the changes was the same in England and Essex, with the percentage of children achieving 5 or more A* to C grades (including English and maths) falling 4 percentage points to 56.8% and 56.5% respectively (state-funded schools only).

However, there was little change in Essex's national rank position

Essex's rank position for 5+ A*-C grades (including English and maths) was 85, only slightly down from 81 in 2013.

An additional 560 pupils would need to attain this measure for Essex to be in the top quartile (the threshold is 59.9%).

Attainment in the English Baccalaureate remained low

The English Baccalaureate is achieved if pupils gain grades A*-C in five core subjects - maths, English, two science qualifications, a foreign language and either history or geography.

There was a 16.9 percentage point difference in attainment between districts for pupils achieving 5 good GCSEs

However, it should be noted that the English Baccalaureate is an optional measure, and will be replaced by the 'Best 8' measure from 2016.

The Essex district ranges for 5+ A*-C grades (including English and maths), are between 47.6% (Braintree) and 64.5% (Brentwood). Half of the Essex Districts performed above the national (State funded school) average of 56.6%.

Several Essex schools achieved outstanding results

Three Essex state funded secondary schools achieved 100% of pupils achieving 5+ GCSE's (including English and maths); Colchester Royal Grammar, Colchester County High School for girls and Chelmsford County High School for girls

Girls again perform better than boys in Essex, as they do nationally

Girls performed better than boys, with 61.6% of girls achieving 5+ A*-C (including English and maths) compared to 51.6% of boys. This difference is in line with national averages.

However, boys and girls in Essex made noticeably better progress than their peers nationally.

Asian pupils had noticeably high levels of attainment when compared to Asian pupils nationally

Asian pupils in Essex performed well compared to Asian pupils nationally (and made more progress in English than any other ethnic group in Essex). On the 5+ GCSE's A*-C (including English and maths), Asian pupils in Essex performed 14 percentage points higher (75.3% and 61.5% respectively) than Asian pupils nationally).

Pupils who do not speak English as a first language performed at least as well as, and often better than, pupils who do

Pupils whose first language is not English performed above the national average for 5+A*-C (including English and maths) - 59.0% locally and 56.5% nationally. They also performed better than other pupils in Essex, especially in the English Baccalaureate, which was achieved by 29.6% of pupils not speaking English as a first language compared to 19.5% of those who do.

Disadvantaged gap is generally similar to the gap nationally, but disadvantaged pupils in Essex schools perform less well than similar pupils elsewhere

The gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in Essex was similar to the gap nationally across most measures. For example for the 5+A*-C (incl. English and maths) measure the gap was 26.9 percentage points in Essex and 27.5 nationally.

Generally, however, disadvantaged pupils in Essex schools had noticeably lower levels of attainment than disadvantaged pupils elsewhere.

Pupils with SEN but no statement perform noticeably less well than similar pupils nationally

Pupils with special educational needs but no statement in Essex have noticeably lower attainment levels than those nationally. For example, only 19.3% achieved 5+A*-C grades compared to 23.5% of similar pupils nationally.

Progress between Key stages 2 and 4 in English was noticeably high, whereas progress in maths was similar at the national average, with SEN pupils making less than expected progress

However, attainment for pupils with a statement of special educational need was more in line with equivalent national averages. For example on the 5+ A*-C (including English and maths) measure, 7.5% of Essex statemented pupils were successful compared with 8.0% nationally.

Overall, progress in English was high, with 72% of pupils in Essex schools achieving the expected rate compared to 70% nationally. The progress of several pupil groups also was noticeably higher than their counterparts nationally, including White pupils, disadvantaged, pupils who do not speak English as a first language and SEN pupils with a statement.

Although progress in maths was, overall, similar to national rates, and white pupils progressed well, SEN pupils with no statement performed noticeably less well than similar pupils nationally (37% in Essex and 41% nationally).

LA maintained and sponsored academies in Essex performed similarly to their national equivalents

Performance at the 5+A*-C grades (incl. English and maths) measure and the proportion of children achieving the English baccalaureate in Essex schools was very close to the national average performance of these school types. However, only 44.5% of pupils in sponsored academies achieved 5+A*-C grades (including English and maths) – fewer than 1 in 2 pupils.

The progress of pupils in sponsored academies is also lower than in other school types. For example, 58.9% of pupils in sponsored academies made the expected progress in maths compared to 64.0% in LA maintained schools and ten percentage points below converter academies.

Results

Table 10: The attainment of pupils in national indicators at key stage 4

Pupil attainment at:	5+A*-C (incl. Eng and maths)			5+ A*-G (Incl. Eng and maths)			English Bacc.			Capped average points		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
Essex (national rank)	59.0% (68)	60.5% (81)	56.5% (85)	94.7% (71)	99.2% (100)	91.7% (63)	13.4% (96)	19.5% (101)	19.9% (114)	341.4 (87)	337.7 (106)	307.6 (91)

Statistical neighbours	58.9%	60.3%	56.8%	94.7%	94.6%	91.4%	15.9%	20.3%	22.5%	342.0	341.6	312.2
Eastern region	58.2%	59.8%	57.2%	94.5%	94.3%	92.0%	16.9%	22.9%	24.1%	341.2	338.5	311.6
England	59.1%	60.8%	56.8%	92.4%	90.5%	85.1%	18.3%	23.0%	22.8%	341.0	339.8	302.9

Table 11: The percentage of pupils making expected progress between key stages 2 and 4

% making expected progress	English			Maths		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
Essex (national rank)	66.5% (101)	69.2% (94)	72.8% (67)	71.0% (53)	71.7% (62)	65.5% (77)
Statistical neighbours	68.1%	70.4%	70.8%	68.0%	65.7%	65.7%
Eastern region	66.5%	68.9%	72.6%	68.8%	71.5%	66.9%
England	68.0%	70.4%	71.6%	68.7%	70.7%	65.5%

Table 12: Key stage 4 attainment by LA maintained and academy schools

	5+A*-C grades (incl. E&M)		English Baccalaureate		English progress		Maths progress	
	England	Essex	England	Essex	England	Essex	England	Essex
LA maintained	55.7%	55.7%	22.6%	20.0%	N/A	71.0%	N/A	64.0%
Sponsored academies	45.4%	44.5%	12.8%	10.5%	N/A	67.5%	N/A	58.9%
Converter academies	63.8%	61.1%	30.5%	22.9%	N/A	76.1%	N/A	68.9%

Key Stage 5

Background

There are two sets of results reported below: table 13 covers all state-funded mainstream schools, academies, free schools, maintained special schools and FE colleges, whilst table 14 refers to results for pupils attending state-funded schools only.

The average point score per entry is one of the main headline measures for the 16-18 performance tables and will become the only key attainment measure by 2016. This measure gives an indication of the average result achieved per qualification taken which enables us to compare achievement over time regardless of the volume of qualifications taken.

Headlines

The average number of points per candidate remains high...

Despite a national trend for average points per candidate reducing over the last several years, Essex's relative position remained very good. Including college results performance was 728.4 points – well ahead of the national average of 714.0. Essex was ranked 31st nationally on this measure (comfortably within the top quartile) and top of our statistical neighbour group.

For those pupils attending state-funded schools, relative performance was even better with Essex being ranked 19th nationally.

...and the percentage of pupils achieving 3 or more top grades was also good

Looking at results which include pupils attending college, 10.6% of Essex pupils achieved 3 or more top grades, up by 0.6 percentage points from 2013 but still below the national average of 12.0%. The gap between Essex and national average has reduced from 2.5 percentage points in 2013 to 1.4 in 2014. Despite being below the national average, our national rank for this measure as a local authority is 35, once again placing us in the top quartile.

For those pupils attending state-funded schools, comparative performance was slightly better. With 12.0% of pupils achieving this measure of high-performance, Essex was ranked 28th nationally.

Several Essex schools achieved outstanding results

Essex has four of the top 31 schools in the Country for A level results (including two in the top ten) with Colchester Royal Grammar school the very top school (this list includes independent schools as well as state funded schools).

Results

Table 13: The attainment of school and college pupils in national indicators at key stage 5

Pupil attainment measures:	Points per candidate			Points per entry			3+ A grades			AAB or better grades		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
Essex (national rank)	756.2 (20)	743.4 (28)	728.4 (31)	209.4 (57)	209.6 (74)	210.7 (72)	11.2% (35)	10.0% (38)	10.6% (35)	18.2% (37)	17.3% (44)	16.8% (46)
Statistical neighbours	697.3	687.5	671.7	206.8	208.4	208.8	8.4%	8.0%	7.7%	14.5%	14.2%	13.7%
Eastern region	722.7	711.4	703.8	209.9	210.2	211.6	11.0%	10.3%	10.6%	17.9%	17.9%	17.6%
England	733.0	724.3	714.0	212.8	213.7	214.6	12.8%	12.5%	12.0%	20.5%	20.3%	19.5%

Table 14: The attainment of pupils at state-funded schools only in national indicators at key stage 5

Pupil attainment measures:	Points per candidate			Points per entry			3+ A grades			AAB or better grades		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
Essex (national rank)	833.5 (25)	826.0 (23)	821.7 (19)	213.9 (3)	215.2 (3)	216.2 (3)	13.9% (22)	12.4% (31)	12.0% (28)	21.2% (25)	20.2% (32)	18.6% (35)
Statistical neighbours	766	758.1	756.6	209.1	210.6	211	9.6%	8.8%	8.9%	15.9%	15.6%	15.5%
Eastern region	795.6	793.7	792.4	213.2	214.5	215.3	11.5%	10.8%	11.2%	18.7%	18.6%	18.2%
England	780.5	779.6	775.3	211.9	213.7	214.8	10.9%	10.7%	10.3%	17.9%	17.9%	17.4%

Young People not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs)

Background

The Department for Education (DfE) monitors the performance of local authorities during November, December and January to establish the number and proportion of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs) and those whose current activity is unknown. This period is when it is anticipated that the number of 'unknowns' will decrease from the peak in September. The DfE aims to bring the figure below 10% in every local authority.

Essex headlines

The average percentage of NEETs continues to decline in Essex

The figure has fallen from 5.7% in 2012/13 to 4.6% in 2014/15, so that there are fewer than 1 in 20 young people not in education, employment or training. This performance meant that Essex almost achieved its demanding target of 4.5%

The percentage of young people whose activity is unknown also continues to fall

The percentage of unknowns for the target period is 7.2%, compared to 7.9% last year. This improvement means that Essex is performing better than the DfE requirement to have unknowns below 10%. This achievement is especially impressive considering that the cohort size of young people in Essex is just under 50,000. It also meant that Essex exceeded its target of 7.9%. Over the last three years the Essex's national rank position has improved from 134 to 79 on this measure.

Results

Table 15: Proportion of NEET pupils in DfE monitoring period

Percentage of 16-19 year olds who are NEET						
Financial year	November 2014	December 2014	January 2015	Average of monitoring period:		
				Essex	Eastern	England
2014-15	4.7%	4.7%	4.4%	4.6%	4.5%	4.7%
2013-14	5.2%	4.9%	4.7%	4.9%	5.1%	5.3%
2012-13	6.0%	5.5%	5.5%	5.7%	5.6%	5.8%

Table 16: Proportion of pupils whose destination is unknown in DfE monitoring period

Percentage of 16-19 year olds whose current destination is unknown						
Financial year	November 2014	December 2014	January 2015	Average of monitoring period		
				Essex	Eastern	England
2014-15	9.3%	7.4%	5.0%	7.2%	6.6%	9.0%
2013-14	9.7%	7.8%	6.1%	7.9%	7.0%	9.2%
2012-13	27.8%	17.6%	9.7%	18.4%	10.6%	10.8%

Attendance

Background

In 2012/13 school absence in Essex was 5.4% across state-funded schools and academies (primary and secondary schools combined). This means that on an average day, for whatever reason, over 9,000 children were not at school - the approximate equivalent of 30 schools closing each day.

Just under 1 in every 20 children (4.7% - averaged across primary and secondary schools) were 'persistent absentees' (defined as those pupils who missed 15% or more possible sessions during the year).

Headlines

Absence rates at primary schools increased slightly in the 2012/13AY...

Historically Essex attendance rates have improved year on year since 2007 (in line with national trends) but this was reversed in 2012/13, when absence rates at primary schools rose 0.3 percentage points to 4.7%. This had a small change on our national rank position, from 71 to 77.

Early data for 2013/14 suggests that absence rates have fallen to 3.8% in the autumn & spring period. Nationally this would place Essex just outside the top 1/3rd of local authorities, with a national ranking of 55.

...but declined slightly in secondary schools

There was a very slight reduction in absence rates at secondary schools, down 0.1 percentage points in 2012/13 to 6.1%. Nationally Essex was ranked 107th out of all local authorities.

Early data for 2013/4 suggests that lower absence (5.2%) has been typical of the rest of the country, so that our national ranking remains in the bottom 1/3rd.

Persistent absentees in primary schools fell very slightly in 2012/13, in line with national changes

In the last full year for which data is available (2012/13) 3% of children were persistent absentees. Although in line with the national average it placed Essex below the mid-point in the national rankings and 10th out of 11 in our statistical neighbour group.

Persistent absentees in secondary schools followed a similar pattern, with the reduction in Essex tracking the change nationally

In 2012/13, 6.4% of secondary pupils in Essex were 'persistent absentees', an improvement from the 2011/12 figure of 7.7%. As with primary pupils this was in line with the national average and placed Essex below the 'mid-point' in the rankings and the lowest placed among our statistical neighbours.

There were improved rates of attendance during the first two terms of 2013/14

After the first 2 terms of 2013/14 there has been progress at **Primary** level with overall absence of 3.8% and PA at 2.6%. In both measures Essex are in the top half of the table of LAs and in the middle of our statistical neighbours.

Secondary absence overall was 5.2% which still leaves us in the bottom 1/3rd but 7th among our statistical neighbours. Persistent absence of 6.4% is higher than the national average but 4th among our statistical neighbours.

Results

NOTE: In the following tables the 2013/14 data refers to the autumn and spring terms only. Data covering the whole academic year (usually deemed to be the first five half terms) is not due for release until 18th March 2015.

Table 17: Overall and persistent absence rates, Essex primary schools and comparators

Primary	Overall absence			Persistent absentees		
	Whole year		Aut/Spr terms	Whole year		Aut/Spr terms
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Essex (national rank)	4.4% (71)	4.7% (77)	3.8%	3.1% (75)	3.0% (81)	2.6%
Statistical neighbours	4.3%	4.6%	3.8%	2.9%	2.8%	2.7%
Eastern region	4.5%	4.7%	4.0%	3.3%	3.0%	2.7%
England	4.4%	4.7%	3.9%	3.1%	3.0%	2.8%

Table 18: Overall and persistent absence rates, Essex secondary schools and comparators

Secondary	Overall absence			Persistent absentees		
	Whole year		Aut/Spr terms	Whole year		Aut/Spr terms
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Essex (national rank)	6.2% (110)	6.1% (107)	5.2%	7.7% (96)	6.4% (80)	6.4%
Statistical neighbours	6.0%	6.0%	5.2%	7.5%	6.9%	6.1%
Eastern region	6.0%	5.9%	5.1%	7.4%	6.2%	5.6%
England	5.9%	5.8%	5.1%	7.4%	6.4%	5.8%

Performance of particular pupil groups

Background

The attainment and progress of particular pupil groups has been addressed in the headlines throughout this report. This section summarises these headlines for each pupil group for easier reference.

Gender

In line with the national picture, girls perform better than boys at all key stages in Essex. The gap is largest (17%) in the early years foundation stage where 70% of girls and 53% of boys achieved a good level of development (the national gap is also 17%). The gap is lower in subsequent key stages, notably so in maths where it is just 2% at KS1 and equality at KS2. However, in writing the gap remains high – 9% at KS1 and KS2. At key stage 4, 10.0% more girls achieve the required standard of 5+ A*-C including English and maths (51.6% v 61.6%) – a similar gap to 2013 and also to national differences.

Ethnic heritage

Asian pupils in Essex performed particularly well, being consistently higher than national averages – typically between 2% - 9% higher key stages 1 and 2, and the early years foundation stage. Their performance in writing at Key Stage 2 stands out as being noticeably higher than Asian pupils nationally and the overall England average. At key stage 4 their performance was also exceptional, with 75.3% achieving 5+ A*-C including English and maths compared to 61.5% of Asian pupils nationally.

Chinese pupils, although a relatively small cohort, showed an improvement in attainment compared to 2013. They performed below the England average for Chinese pupils most noticeably at key stage 2, where they were 3 percentage points lower in reading and maths.

White British pupils form the largest ethnic group in Essex schools at all key stages. Their levels of attainment in 2014 show an improvement over 2013, when they were the lowest attaining ethnic group at all key stages except the EYFSP. In 2014 they performed above the average for White British pupils nationally and the England average for the EYFSP, and at key stage 1 reading and maths. At key stage 2 their performance was the lowest of the ethnic groups in Essex for reading and writing. For the high-profile measure of level 4+ in reading, writing and maths their performance was joint lowest (with Black pupils) at 79%. At KS4, 56.0% of White British pupils achieved 5+ A*-C grades (including English and maths), with only Black pupils having a lower average (53.7%). The performance of Black pupils on this measure was noticeably lower than Black pupils nationally (60.3%).

First language

The performance of Essex pupils with English as an Additional Language mirrors England averages very closely (typically +/- 1%) across all key stages and measures. The only notable exception to this is at key stage 2 where 81% of Essex EAL pupils achieved level 4+ in writing compared to 84% nationally – a pattern repeated from 2013.

Free school meals/Disadvantaged

NOTE: The attainment of pupils entitled to free school meals is monitored in the early years foundation stage and key stage 1. For key stages 2 and 4 the attainment

of disadvantaged pupils is monitored instead, in line with DfE measures.

Free School Meals: 43% of FSM pupils in Essex achieved a good level of development in the early years foundation stage compared to 51% of pupils with no FSM; nationally, 45% of FSM pupils reached the same level. At Key Stage 1 the gap between FSM/non-FSM pupils is largest in writing (14 percentage points) although this mirrors the situation nationally. Differences in reading and maths are smaller, at 11 and 8 percentage points respectively, again similar to the gaps nationally.

Disadvantaged: Key stage 2 is a particular area of concern for disadvantaged pupils, with 66% achieving level 4+ in reading, writing and maths compared to 83% for non-disadvantaged pupils. These results are very similar to the picture nationally (67% and 84% respectively). Disadvantaged pupils also make less overall progress between key stages 1 and 2 than other pupils, with the gap largest in maths, where 84% of disadvantaged pupils make the expected level of progress compared to 91% for non-disadvantaged pupils. Nationally that gap is 2 percentage points smaller. The disadvantaged/non-disadvantaged gap increases further at key stage 4 to nearly 27 percentage points (35.4% v 62.3%) for pupils achieving 5+ A*-C (including English and maths). Disadvantaged pupils across England perform 1.3% higher than in Essex with 36.7% achieving the standard.

Special Educational Needs

Pupils with SEN in Essex tend to perform lower than their national counterparts across all key stages. In the early years foundation stage the gap between pupils with SEN but no statement in Essex schools and the same group nationally increased from 1 percentage point in 2013 to 3 in 2014. At key stage 1 the gap was largest in writing at 4 percentage points, whilst at key stage 2 there was low comparative performance in reading and writing, leading to a 4 percentage point gap in the combined reading, writing and maths measure (42% nationally for pupils with SEN but no statements compared to 38% in Essex). These pupils also made noticeably less progress between Key Stages 1 and 2 than the same group nationally (91% in Essex compared to 83% nationally).

At key stage 4 there was lower performance for SEN pupils with no statement in Essex across all indicators. For example, fewer than 1 in 5 pupils with SEN but no statement achieved the 5+A*-C (incl. English and maths) in Essex, a noticeably lower rate than nationally (19.3% compared to 23.5%). Progress between Key Stages 2 and 4 was lower than similar pupils nationally, especially in maths (37% in Essex making expected progress compared to 41% nationally).

Children in Care (CiC)

The figures below relate to those Children in Care for whom Essex is responsible, irrespective of which Local Authority provides their education. Any Children in Care who are the responsibility of other Local Authorities but are schooled in Essex are not included.

Key stage 1: The percentage of Children in Care achieving expected attainment levels in reading, writing and maths increased from 2013. For reading, the figure was 78% (+5 percentage points from 2013), writing 74% (+4) and maths 74% (+1). The improved figures put Essex in a good position when ranked against other LAs. In reading we were placed 17th (out of 65 LAs with published results), in writing 8th (out of 60) and in maths 30th (out of 65). Over the last three years the gap in attainment between Children in Care and their peers has reduced (especially in writing). There were also a fair proportion of high-achieving children, with 11% gaining a level 3 in reading and maths.

Progress between key stages 1 and 2: There was a sharp improvement in the percentage of children in care making two or more levels of progress between KS1 and 2 in reading, writing and maths – the best result in the last three years. In reading 84% of children made the expected rate of progress (+5 from 2013), in writing 89% (+17) and in maths 74% (+10). These results are collated internally, and although the DfE does not produce equivalent progression statistics for Children in Care nationally for each Key Stage 2 subject, they do state that progress for Children in Care was ‘around 75%’. The progression figures for **all** children in Essex were: 91% in reading, 92% in writing and 89% in maths – the equivalent figures for Children in Care compare well to these.

Key stage 2: Performance improved in reading (+2 from 2013) and writing (+6), but there was a fall (-4) in maths. Overall these results meant that the combined attainment in reading, writing and maths fell 4 percentage points to 40%, leaving Essex ranked 65th out of 81 local authorities. There were very high levels of SEN for this cohort – 55%.

Key stage 4: Only 8.5% of Children in care achieved five or more good grades including English and maths, the lowest result in the last five years. The drop can partly be attributed to several changes in GCSE counting methodology (see the box on page 22); nevertheless, the result left Essex ranked 31st (out of 45 LAs).

Progress between key stages 2 and 4: Progress in 2014 was slightly down on 2013, with only 38% of children in care making the expected rate of progress in English (-4 from 2013) and 35% in maths (-1). For comparison, 72% of **all** children in Essex made expected progress in English, and 65% in maths.

Table 19: The attainment of CiC at key stages 1 to 4, Essex vs. comparators.

Percentage of CiC reaching expected levels:	Key Stage 1 (level 2+)			Key Stage 2 (level 4+)	Key Stage 4
	Reading	Writing	Maths	R, W & M	5+A*-C (incl. E/M)
Essex (national rank)	78%	74%	74%	40% (65/81)	8.5% (31/45)
Statistical neighbours	Not published	Not published	Not published	45%	11.8%
Eastern region	Not published	Not published	Not published	44%	10.3%
England	71%	61%	72%	48%	12.0%

Description of pupil groups used in this report

Pupil group definitions

Gender: The gender of the pupil is recorded as male or female on the school census.

Free School Meals (FSM): states whether a pupil's family have claimed eligibility for free school meals in the academic year reported at the time of the annual spring school census for EYFSP, Phonics, KS1 and KS2. Parents are able to claim free school meals if they receive a qualifying benefit. For KS4, performance tables' data is used which means that the FSM variable outcome recorded for some pupils in the Spring census may change after the school checking exercise.

Please note: The FSM variable does *not* relate to pupils who actually received free school meals but those who are eligible to receive free school meals.

Disadvantaged: defined as pupils known to be eligible to free school meals in the previous six years as indicated in any termly or annual school census, pupil referral unit or alternative provision census *or* are children looked after by the local authority for more than 6 months.

Ethnic heritage: Ethnicity is recorded for all pupils aged 5 and over in the January 2014 school census as at the previous 31 August. Those pupils who are classified according to their ethnic group and are other than white British are defined as minority ethnic pupils.

First language: "First Language" is the language to which a child was initially exposed during early development and continues to be exposed to this language in the home or in the community.

Special Educational Needs (SEN): The SEN variable indicates whether a pupil has learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn than most children of the same age.

Pupils with special educational needs comprise those at School Action, School Action Plus or with statements of SEN:

- School Action – where extra or different help is given, from that provided as part of the school's usual curriculum.
- School Action Plus – where the class teacher and the SENCO receive advice or support from outside specialists (the specialist teacher, an educational psychologist, a speech and language therapist or other health professionals).
- Statement – a pupil has a statement of SEN when a formal assessment has been made. A document setting out the child's needs and the extra help they should receive is in place.

Additional data annex

Early Years Foundation Stage

Table 20: EYFSP attainment, Essex pupil groups vs national pupil group attainment, 2013 and 2014

Pupil groups		Percentage of children achieving a good level of development				Essex cohort 2014
		2013		2014		
		England	Essex	England	Essex	
All pupils		52%	53%	60%	61%	16,444
Gender	Boys	44%	44%	52%	53%	8,468
	Girls	60%	62%	69%	70%	7,976
Ethnic heritage	White	53%	53%	62%	62%	14,052
	Mixed	53%	53%	62%	62%	716
	Asian	47%	48%	57%	63%	330
	Black	51%	52%	59%	58%	328
	Chinese	49%	50%	58%	59%	46
First language	English	54%	53%	63%	62%	14,006
	Not English	44%	43%	53%	51%	1,052
Free school meals	FSM	36%	35%	45%	43%	2,235
	Non-FSM	55%	55%	64%	64%	14,209
Special Educational Needs	No SEN	56%	56%	66%	66%	14,699
	SEN no statement	16%	15%	21%	18%	1,050
	SEN Statement	2%	3%	3%	6%	290

Key Stage 1

Table 21: Key Stage 1 Level 2+ attainment, Essex vs geographical and statistical comparators, 2012 to 2014

% Level 2+	Reading			Writing			Maths		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
Essex (national rank)	88% (33)	90% (28)	91% (26)	83% (62)	85% (67)	86% (66)	92% (26)	93% (19)	93% (34)
Statistical neighbours	88%	90%	91%	85%	87%	87%	92%	93%	93%
Eastern region	88%	89%	90%	84%	86%	87%	91%	92%	93%
England	87%	89%	90%	83%	85%	86%	91%	91%	92%

Table 22: Key Stage 1 Level 3 attainment, Essex vs geographical and statistical comparators, 2012 to 2014

% Level 3	Reading			Writing			Maths		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
Essex (national rank)	29% (38)	32% (27)	33% (35)	14% (47)	17% (24)	18% (25)	23% (40)	25% (34)	26% (36)
Statistical neighbours	29%	31%	33%	15%	16%	17%	23%	24%	25%
Eastern region	30%	31%	33%	16%	17%	19%	24%	25%	26%
England	27%	29%	31%	14%	15%	16%	22%	23%	24%

Table 23: Key Stage 1 level 2+ attainment, Essex pupil groups vs national pupil group attainment, 2014

Pupil groups		% Level 2+						Essex cohort 2014
		Reading		Writing		Mathematics		
		England	Essex	England	Essex	England	Essex	
All pupils		90%	91%	86%	86%	92%	93%	15,854
Gender	Boys	87%	88%	82%	82%	91%	92%	8,116
	Girls	93%	93%	91%	91%	93%	94%	7,748
Ethnic heritage	White	90%	91%	86%	86%	92%	93%	14,005
	Mixed	91%	90%	87%	88%	92%	92%	696
	Asian	91%	93%	88%	92%	92%	93%	375
	Black	90%	92%	87%	87%	91%	91%	385
	Chinese	92%	94%	89%	91%	96%	96%	67
First language	English	91%	91%	87%	87%	93%	93%	14,711
	Not English	87%	87%	83%	83%	90%	91%	1,076
Free school meals	FSM	80%	81%	75%	74%	85%	86%	2,121
	Non-FSM	92%	92%	89%	88%	94%	94%	13,743
Special Educational Needs	No SEN	97%	97%	94%	95%	98%	98%	13,086
	SEN no statement	64%	63%	54%	50%	73%	74%	2,293
	SEN Statement	25%	31%	19%	21%	28%	33%	421

Key Stage 2

Table 24: Key Stage 2 Level 5+ attainment, Essex vs geographical and statistical comparators, 2012 to 2014

% Level 5+	R,W & M			Reading			Writing (TA)			Maths		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
Essex (national rank)	20% (63)	21% (66)	24% (58)	49% (60)	45% (76)	50% (60)	28% (68)	31% (56)	33% (66)	40% (54)	40% (79)	42% (66)
Statistical neighbours	20%	20%	23%	49%	45%	51%	28%	30%	33%	39%	39%	42%
Eastern region	20%	21%	23%	48%	45%	49%	28%	30%	33%	39%	39%	74%
England	20%	21%	24%	48%	45%	50%	28%	30%	33%	39%	41%	76%

Table 25: Key Stage 2 Level 4+ attainment, Essex pupil group vs national pupil group attainment, 2014

Pupil groups & Level 4+		R, W & M		Reading		Writing		Maths		Essex cohort 2014
		England	Essex	England	Essex	England	Essex	England	Essex	
All pupils		79%	79%	89%	89%	85%	85%	86%	87%	14,640
Gender	Boys	76%	76%	87%	88%	81%	81%	86%	87%	7,424
	Girls	82%	82%	91%	91%	90%	90%	86%	87%	7,217
Ethnic heritage	White	79%	79%	89%	89%	85%	85%	86%	87%	13,246
	Mixed	80%	83%	90%	92%	87%	90%	86%	86%	527
	Asian	80%	88%	89%	93%	87%	92%	87%	91%	280
	Black	77%	79%	88%	89%	85%	87%	84%	84%	303
	Chinese	89%	88%	93%	90%	91%	90%	95%	92%	59
First language	English	79%	79%	89%	90%	86%	86%	86%	87%	13,823
	Not English	77%	75%	86%	84%	84%	81%	86%	85%	788
Disadvantage d	Disad	67%	66%	82%	82%	77%	74%	78%	77%	1,813
	Non-Disad	84%	83%	92%	92%	90%	89%	90%	90%	12,827
Special Educational Needs	No SEN	90%	90%	96%	96%	95%	95%	94%	94%	11,885
	SEN no statement	42%	38%	69%	67%	55%	51%	63%	61%	2,182
	SEN Statement	15%	16%	29%	31%	19%	20%	25%	29%	547

Table 26: Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 progress measure, Essex pupil group vs national pupil group attainment, 2014

Pupil groups		% Progress in Reading		% Progress in Writing		% Progress in Mathematics		Essex cohort 2014
		England	Essex	England	Essex	England	Essex	
All pupils		91%	91%	93%	92%	89%	89%	14,255
Gender	Boys	90%	90%	91%	91%	90%	89%	7,227
	Girls	91%	91%	94%	94%	89%	89%	7,028
Ethnic heritage	White	91%	90%	93%	92%	89%	89%	12,980
	Mixed	92%	95%	94%	95%	90%	90%	499
	Asian	92%	95%	94%	94%	93%	94%	255
	Black	91%	90%	93%	93%	90%	89%	262
	Chinese	95%	93%	95%	96%	97%	93%	56
First language	English	91%	91%	93%	92%	89%	89%	13,594
	Not English	91%	90%	93%	92%	92%	93%	630
Disadvantaged	Disad	88%	86%	90%	89%	86%	84%	3,434
	Non-Disad	92%	92%	94%	93%	91%	91%	10,821
Special Educational Needs	No SEN	94%	94%	96%	95%	94%	93%	11,585
	SEN no statement	83%	81%	86%	84%	79%	76%	2,135
	SEN Statement	49%	52%	51%	54%	48%	55%	533

Key Stage 4

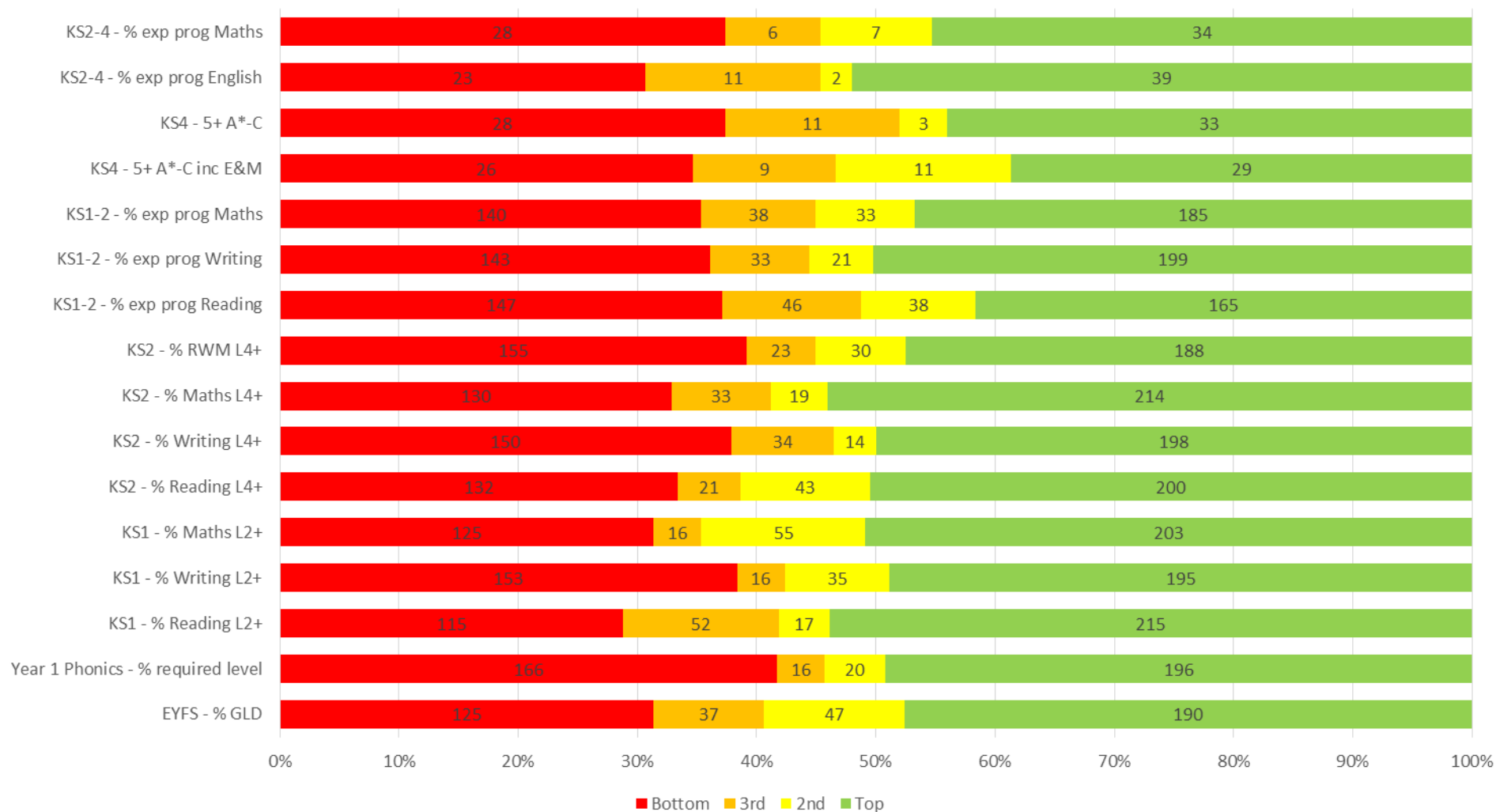
Table 27: Key Stage 4 attainment, Essex pupil group vs national pupil group attainment, 2014

Pupil groups		% 5+A*-C (incl. E&M)		5+A*-C		English Bacc.		Essex cohort 2014
		England	Essex	England	Essex	England	Essex	
All pupils		56.8%	56.5%	65.8%	64.7%	24.3%	19.9%	16,470
Gender	Boys	51.9%	51.6%	60.1%	58.8%	19.5%	15.3%	8,417
	Girls	62.0%	61.6%	71.7%	70.9%	29.2%	24.7%	8,053
Ethnic heritage	White	56.3%	56.0%	65.1%	64.3%	23.6%	19.6%	14,061
	Mixed	57.9%	60.1%	67.4%	69.6%	26.5%	23.2%	496
	Asian	61.5%	75.3%	70.9%	80.1%	29.6%	30.3%	271
	Black	60.3%	53.7%	64.7%	71.2%	21.4%	21.9%	302
	Chinese	76.3%	77.6%	87.1%	81.6%	50.8%	44.9%	49
First language	English	56.9%	56.3%	56.9%	56.3%	23.9%	19.5%	14,794
	Not English	56.5%	59.0%	56.5%	59.0%	26.6%	29.6%	632
Disadvantaged	Disad	36.7%	35.4%	45.1%	42.1%	11.0%	8.2%	3,346
	Non-Disad	64.2%	62.3%	73.4%	71.0%	29.2%	23.2%	12,090
Special Educational Needs	No SEN	65.7%	63.8%	75.0%	72.3%	29.0%	23.1%	13,034
	SEN but no statement	23.5%	19.3%	32.0%	27.5%	5.7%	3.0%	1,784
	SEN Statement	8.0%	7.5%	11.3%	11.0%	2.0%	1.3%	616

Table 28: Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 progress measure, Essex pupil group vs national pupil group attainment, 2014

Pupil groups		% Progress in English		% Progress in mathematics		Essex cohort 2014
		England	Essex	England	Essex	
All pupils		70%	72%	65%	65%	15,195
Gender	Boys	64%	66%	62%	63%	7,781
	Girls	76%	78%	67%	68%	7,414
Ethnic heritage	White	69%	71%	64%	65%	13,866
	Mixed	73%	73%	66%	67%	483
	Asian	80%	84%	78%	80%	265
	Black	75%	79%	68%	71%	275
	Chinese	86%	83%	92%	90%	48
First language	English	70%	72%	64%	65%	14,635
	Not English	76%	80%	72%	77%	534
Disadvantaged	Disadvantaged	58%	60%	48%	47%	3,293
	Non-disadvantaged	75%	75%	71%	70%	11,902
Special Educational Needs	No SEN	75%	76%	72%	71%	12,825
	SEN no statement	53%	52%	41%	37%	1,753
	SEN Statement	27%	31%	19%	21%	617

Number of Essex schools in national quartile bandings in 2014



Essex rank position summary

Measure	Essex National Ranking (out of 153 LAs)			Latest quartile group	Essex Statistical Neighbours Ranking (out of 11 LAs)			Essex Eastern Region Ranking (out of 11 LAs)		
	2012	2013	2014		2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
EYFSP - Good Level of Development	107	51	57	B	10	5	6	7	2	4
EYFSP - Working at Required Level	117	99	74	C	8	9	6	6	7	3
KS1 - L2+ Reading	33	28	26	B	6	5	4	3	4	4
KS1 - L2+ Writing	62	67	66	C	8	7	9	7	5	4
KS1 - L2+ Maths	26	19	34	B	2	2	4	3	3	5
KS2 - L4+ Reading	65	74	64	C	4	4	4	2	2	3
KS2 - L4+ Writing	80	87	81	C	6	5	8	3	3	4
KS2 - L4+ Maths	75	94	53	C	3	4	2	2	2	2
KS2 - L4+ Reading, Writing & Maths	82	90	69	C	6	4	4	3	2	3
KS1-2 - Expected Progress Reading	110	124	78	C	4	7	3	4	4	2
KS1-2 - Expected Progress Writing	110	116	115	D	2	6	6	3	4	5
KS1-2 - Expected Progress Maths	97	119	95	C	2	4	4	2	4	3
KS4 - 5+ A*-C	96	116	92	C	5	8	7	6	7	5
KS4 - 5+ A*-C incl. English & Maths	68	81	85	C	4	4	7	4	4	4
KS4 - English Baccalaureate	96	101	114	D	8	7	10	6	6	9
KS4 - 5+ A*-G incl. English & Maths	71	100	63	B	6	9	6	4	7	4
KS4 - Average Points Score	83	91	98	C	5	7	9	6	8	10
KS2-4 - Expected Progress English	101	94	67	B	8	8	4	7	6	5
KS2-4 - Expected Progress Maths	53	62	77	C	2	3	7	4	6	6
KS5 - % AAB or better	37	44	46	B	3	3	3	4	4	4

KS5 - Average Points Score	20	28	31	A	2	2	1	2	1	2
KS5 - Average Points Score per Entry	57	74	72	B	3	4	3	4	4	4
Level 2 achievement	84	89	TBA	C	10	11	TBA	8	8	TBA
Level 3 achievement	77	83	TBA	C	9	9	TBA	8	7	TBA
FSM/non FSM gap level 3 attainment	77	84	TBA	C	3	4	TBA	7	4	TBA
FSM/non FSM gap level 2 attainment	62	68	TBA	C	2	4	TBA	3	6	TBA

Source : National - DfE Local Authority Data Matrix issued 4th January 2015, SN & ER - Local Authority Interactive Toolkit (LAIT)

Basildon District Summary

Measure		Basildon Performance		2014 comparisons		
		2013	2014	Basildon District Rank (1 = Best Performance)	Highest District	Lowest District
OFSTED	Primary - Good or Outstanding (Overall grade) 31 st August	64%	74%	6	96%	56%
	Secondary - Good or Outstanding (Overall grade) 31 st August	63%	44%	11	100%	43%
EYFSP	EYFS Good Level of Development	52%	61%	7	68%	57%
Phonics	Year 1 Phonics (required level)	63%	72%	9	81%	68%
Key stage 1	KS1 L2B+ Reading	76%	80%	9	87%	76%
	KS1 L2B+ Writing	65%	68%	8	77%	64%
	KS1 L2B+ Maths	78%	80%	8	87%	76%
Key stage 2 - attainment	KS2 L4+ Reading, Writing & Maths	72%	76%	11	88%	73%
	KS2 L4+ Reading	83%	88%	11	95%	86%
	KS2 L4+ Writing	81%	84%	9	91%	82%
	KS2 L4+ Maths	83%	86%	7	94%	82%
	KS2 K4+ Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling	72%	77%	7	83%	72%

Key stage 2 - progress	KS1-2 Expected progress in Reading	83%	89%	10	94%	88%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Reading	25%	28%	10	38%	28%
	KS1-2 Expected progress in Writing	90%	93%	4	95%	90%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Writing	25%	33%	5	35%	26%
	KS1-2 Expected progress in Maths	84%	88%	8	93%	85%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Maths	25%	30%	11	40%	26%
Key stage 4 – attainment	KS4 5+ GCSE's A*-C (Incl. E & M)	56.6%	53.8%	9	64.5%	47.6%
	KS4 5+ GCSE's A*-C	79.8%	60.4%	10	73.0%	58.8%
Key stage 4 - progress	KS2-4 Expected progress in English	65.9%	71.4%	11	79.9%	65.1%
	KS2-4 Expected progress in Maths	68.0%	64.3%	9	74.6%	58.0%
Absence	Overall Absence Primary (Autumn and Spring Terms)	5.32%	4.04%	12	3.27%	4.48%
	Overall Absence Secondary (Autumn and Spring Terms)	6.87%	5.66%	12	4.53%	5.66%

Braintree District Summary

Measure		Braintree Performance		2014 comparisons		
		2013	2014	Braintree District Rank (1 = Best Performance)	Highest District	Lowest District
OFSTED	Primary - Good or Outstanding (Overall grade) 31 st August	77%	75%	5	96%	56%
	Secondary - Good or Outstanding (Overall grade) 31 st August	57%	50%	9	100%	43%
EYFSP	EYFS Good Level of Development	52%	57%	12	68%	57%
Phonics	Year 1 Phonics (required level)	64%	72%	9	81%	68%
Key stage 1	KS1 L2B+ Reading	79%	79%	10	87%	76%
	KS1 L2B+ Writing	68%	68%	8	77%	64%
	KS1 L2B+ Maths	79%	79%	9	87%	76%
Key stage 2	KS2 L4+ Reading, Writing & Maths	75%	79%	6	88%	73%

- attainment	KS2 L4+ Reading	87%	89%	6	95%	86%
	KS2 L4+ Writing	86%	84%	9	91%	82%
	KS2 L4+ Maths	84%	86%	7	94%	82%
	KS2 K4+ Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling	72%	75%	9	83%	72%
Key stage 2 - progress	KS1-2 Expected progress in Reading	88%	91%	6	94%	88%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Reading	27%	32%	6	38%	28%
	KS1-2 Expected progress in Writing	91%	91%	11	95%	90%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Writing	29%	32%	6	35%	26%
	KS1-2 Expected progress in Maths	86%	89%	7	93%	85%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Maths	27%	32%	7	40%	26%
Key stage 4 - attainment	KS4 5+ GCSE's A*-C (Incl. E & M)	53.0%	47.6%	12	64.5%	47.6%
	KS4 5+ GCSE's A*-C	73.5%	58.8%	12	73.0%	58.8%
Key stage 4 - progress	KS2-4 Expected progress in English	65.1%	65.1%	12	79.9%	65.1%
	KS2-4 Expected progress in Maths	65.0%	58.0%	12	74.6%	58.0%
Absence	Overall Absence Primary (Autumn and Spring Terms)	4.86%	3.91%	8	3.27%	4.48%
	Overall Absence Secondary (Autumn and Spring Terms)	6.40%	5.29%	10	4.53%	5.66%

Brentwood District Summary

Measure		Brentwood Performance		2014 comparisons		
		2013	2014	Brentwood District Rank (1 = Best Performance)	Highest District	Lowest District
OFSTED	Primary - Good or Outstanding (Overall grade) 31 st August	92%	96%	1	96%	56%
	Secondary - Good or Outstanding (Overall grade) 31 st August	60%	80%	5	100%	43%
EYFSP	EYFS Good Level of Development	52%	63%	4	68%	57%
Phonics	Year 1 Phonics (required level)	75%	78%	2	81%	68%

Key stage 1	KS1 L2B+ Reading	86%	87%	1	87%	76%
	KS1 L2B+ Writing	79%	77%	1	77%	64%
	KS1 L2B+ Maths	85%	87%	1	87%	76%
Key stage 2 - attainment	KS2 L4+ Reading, Writing & Maths	84%	86%	2	88%	73%
	KS2 L4+ Reading	92%	93%	2	95%	86%
	KS2 L4+ Writing	89%	91%	1	91%	82%
	KS2 L4+ Maths	91%	91%	2	94%	82%
	KS2 K4+ Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling	84%	82%	2	83%	72%
Key stage 2 - progress	KS1-2 Expected progress in Reading	89%	93%	2	94%	88%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Reading	25%	28%	10	38%	28%
	KS1-2 Expected progress in Writing	91%	94%	3	95%	90%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Writing	27%	31%	7	35%	26%
	KS1-2 Expected progress in Maths	90%	92%	2	93%	85%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Maths	34%	35%	3	40%	26%
Key stage 4 - attainment	KS4 5+ GCSE's A*-C (Incl. E & M)	70.9%	64.5%	1	64.5%	47.6%
	KS4 5+ GCSE's A*-C	82.2%	73.0%	1	73.0%	58.8%
Key stage 4 - progress	KS2-4 Expected progress in English	79.0%	72.4%	7	79.9%	65.1%
	KS2-4 Expected progress in Maths	76.9%	74.6%	1	74.6%	58.0%
Absence	Overall Absence Primary (Autumn and Spring Terms)	4.37%	3.27%	1	3.27%	4.48%
	Overall Absence Secondary (Autumn and Spring Terms)	5.98%	5.04%	6	4.53%	5.66%

Castle Point District Summary

Measure		Castle Point Performance		2014 comparisons		
		2013	2014	Castle Point District Rank (1 = Best Performance)	Highest District	Lowest District
OFSTED	Primary - Good or Outstanding (Overall grade) 31 st	87%	74%	7	96%	56%

	August					
	Secondary - Good or Outstanding (Overall grade) 31st August	100%	100%	1	100%	43%
EYFSP	EYFS Good Level of Development	52%	59%	9	68%	57%
Phonics	Year 1 Phonics (required level)	66%	73%	8	81%	68%
Key stage 1	KS1 L2B+ Reading	80%	82%	6	87%	76%
	KS1 L2B+ Writing	67%	70%	5	77%	64%
	KS1 L2B+ Maths	79%	79%	9	87%	76%
Key stage 2 - attainment	KS2 L4+ Reading, Writing & Maths	80%	82%	3	88%	73%
	KS2 L4+ Reading	89%	90%	4	95%	86%
	KS2 L4+ Writing	88%	87%	3	91%	82%
	KS2 L4+ Maths	87%	89%	4	94%	82%
	KS2 K4+ Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling	75%	79%	3	83%	72%
Key stage 2 - progress	KS1-2 Expected progress in Reading	88%	91%	6	94%	88%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Reading	28%	30%	9	38%	28%
	KS1-2 Expected progress in Writing	94%	92%	7	95%	90%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Writing	30%	34%	3	35%	26%
	KS1-2 Expected progress in Maths	89%	90%	6	93%	85%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Maths	36%	37%	2	40%	26%
Key stage 4 – attainment	KS4 5+ GCSE's A*-C (Incl. E & M)	61.1%	54.1%	8	64.5%	47.6%
	KS4 5+ GCSE's A*-C	90.2%	61.0%	9	73.0%	58.8%
Key stage 4 - progress	KS2-4 Expected progress in English	69.6%	74.8%	5	79.9%	65.1%
	KS2-4 Expected progress in Maths	72.4%	65.2%	7	74.6%	58.0%
Absence	Overall Absence Primary (Autumn and Spring Terms)	5.39%	4.24%	11	3.27%	4.48%
	Overall Absence Secondary (Autumn and Spring Terms)	6.50%	5.17%	7	4.53%	5.66%

Chelmsford District Summary

Measure	Chelmsford Performance	2014 comparisons
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		2013	2014	Chelmsford District Rank (1 = Best Performance)	Highest District	Lowest District
OFSTED	Primary - Good or Outstanding (Overall grade) 31 st August	75%	85%	2	96%	56%
	Secondary - Good or Outstanding (Overall grade) 31 st August	90%	90%	4	100%	43%
EYFSP	EYFS Good Level of Development	55%	65%	2	68%	57%
Phonics	Year 1 Phonics (required level)	70%	74%	6	81%	68%
Key stage 1	KS1 L2B+ Reading	84%	84%	3	87%	76%
	KS1 L2B+ Writing	71%	73%	2	77%	64%
	KS1 L2B+ Maths	82%	83%	2	87%	76%
Key stage 2 - attainment	KS2 L4+ Reading, Writing & Maths	79%	80%	5	88%	73%
	KS2 L4+ Reading	90%	90%	4	95%	86%
	KS2 L4+ Writing	84%	86%	4	91%	82%
	KS2 L4+ Maths	88%	86%	7	94%	82%
	KS2 K4+ Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling	80%	79%	3	83%	72%
Key stage 2 - progress	KS1-2 Expected progress in Reading	88%	91%	6	94%	88%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Reading	25%	31%	8	38%	28%
	KS1-2 Expected progress in Writing	90%	90%	12	95%	90%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Writing	23%	28%	9	35%	26%
	KS1-2 Expected progress in Maths	89%	88%	8	93%	85%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Maths	31%	32%	6	40%	26%
Key stage 4 – attainment	KS4 5+ GCSE's A*-C (Incl. E & M)	62.4%	61.7%	1	64.5%	47.6%
	KS4 5+ GCSE's A*-C	79.6%	71.0%	3	73.0%	58.8%
Key stage 4 - progress	KS2-4 Expected progress in English	68.4%	74.6%	6	79.9%	65.1%
	KS2-4 Expected progress in Maths	73.1%	70.6%	3	74.6%	58.0%
Absence	Overall Absence Primary (Autumn and Spring Terms)	4.44%	3.56%	4	3.27%	4.48%
	Overall Absence Secondary (Autumn and Spring Terms)	6.19%	4.96%	2	4.53%	5.66%

Colchester District Summary

Measure		Colchester Performance		2014 comparisons		
		2013	2014	Colchester District Rank (1 = Best Performance)	Highest District	Lowest District
OFSTED	Primary - Good or Outstanding (Overall grade) 31 st August	67%	74%	4	96%	56%
	Secondary - Good or Outstanding (Overall grade) 31 st August	45%	55%	8	100%	43%
EYFSP	EYFS Good Level of Development	56%	61%	7	68%	57%
Phonics	Year 1 Phonics (required level)	68%	76%	5	81%	68%
Key stage 1	KS1 L2B+ Reading	80%	82%	6	87%	76%
	KS1 L2B+ Writing	68%	70%	5	77%	64%
	KS1 L2B+ Maths	78%	81%	6	87%	76%
Key stage 2 - attainment	KS2 L4+ Reading, Writing & Maths	75%	79%	6	88%	73%
	KS2 L4+ Reading	87%	89%	6	95%	86%
	KS2 L4+ Writing	83%	85%	7	91%	82%
	KS2 L4+ Maths	85%	88%	5	94%	82%
	KS2 K4+ Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling	74%	78%	5	83%	72%
Key stage 2 - progress	KS1-2 Expected progress in Reading	89%	92%	3	94%	88%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Reading	30%	34%	2	38%	28%
	KS1-2 Expected progress in Writing	92%	93%	4	95%	90%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Writing	33%	34%	3	35%	26%
	KS1-2 Expected progress in Maths	88%	91%	4	93%	85%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Maths	31%	34%	4	40%	26%
Key stage 4 – attainment	KS4 5+ GCSE's A*-C (Incl. E & M)	66.2%	56.3%	7	64.5%	47.6%
	KS4 5+ GCSE's A*-C	80.0%	65.7%	6	73.0%	58.8%

Key stage 4 - progress	KS2-4 Expected progress in English	74.1%	72.1%	8	79.9%	65.1%
	KS2-4 Expected progress in Maths	73.1%	64.5%	8	74.6%	58.0%
Absence	Overall Absence Primary (Autumn and Spring Terms)	4.70%	3.82%	5	3.27%	4.48%
	Overall Absence Secondary (Autumn and Spring Terms)	5.60%	4.98%	4	4.53%	5.66%

Epping Forest District Summary

Measure		Epping Forest Performance		2014 comparisons		
		2013	2014	Epping Forest District Rank (1 = Best Performance)	Highest District	Lowest District
OFSTED	Primary - Good or Outstanding (Overall grade) 31 st August	66%	70%	8	96%	56%
	Secondary - Good or Outstanding (Overall grade) 31 st August	67%	83%	5	100%	43%
EYFSP	EYFS Good Level of Development	54%	62%	5	68%	57%
Phonics	Year 1 Phonics (required level)	67%	74%	6	81%	68%
Key stage 1	KS1 L2B+ Reading	82%	84%	3	87%	76%
	KS1 L2B+ Writing	68%	70%	5	77%	64%
	KS1 L2B+ Maths	81%	83%	2	87%	76%
Key stage 2 - attainment	KS2 L4+ Reading, Writing & Maths	74%	78%	8	88%	73%
	KS2 L4+ Reading	85%	89%	6	95%	86%
	KS2 L4+ Writing	84%	86%	4	91%	82%
	KS2 L4+ Maths	83%	85%	10	94%	82%
	KS2 K4+ Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling	72%	75%	9	83%	72%
Key stage 2 - progress	KS1-2 Expected progress in Reading	83%	89%	10	94%	88%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Reading	24%	28%	10	38%	28%
	KS1-2 Expected progress in Writing	91%	92%	7	95%	90%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Writing	28%	28%	9	35%	26%
	KS1-2 Expected progress in Maths	85%	87%	10	93%	85%

	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Maths	25%	31%	10	40%	26%
Key stage 4 – attainment	KS4 5+ GCSE's A*-C (Incl. E & M)	68.7%	61.4%	5	64.5%	47.6%
	KS4 5+ GCSE's A*-C	86.0%	68.7%	5	73.0%	58.8%
Key stage 4 - progress	KS2-4 Expected progress in English	77.3%	76.3%	4	79.9%	65.1%
	KS2-4 Expected progress in Maths	76.8%	68.1%	6	74.6%	58.0%
Absence	Overall Absence Primary (Autumn and Spring Terms)	4.76%	3.91%	9	3.27%	4.48%
	Overall Absence Secondary (Autumn and Spring Terms)	5.54%	5.17%	8	4.53%	5.66%

Harlow District Summary

Measure		Harlow Performance		2014 comparisons		
		2013	2014	Harlow District Rank (1 = Best Performance)	Highest District	Lowest District
OFSTED	Primary - Good or Outstanding (Overall grade) 31 st August	48%	64%	11	96%	56%
	Secondary - Good or Outstanding (Overall grade) 31 st August	80%	100%	1	100%	43%
EYFSP	EYFS Good Level of Development	38%	59%	9	68%	57%
Phonics	Year 1 Phonics (required level)	66%	68%	12	81%	68%
Key stage 1	KS1 L2B+ Reading	76%	79%	11	87%	76%
	KS1 L2B+ Writing	61%	65%	11	77%	64%
	KS1 L2B+ Maths	72%	76%	11	87%	76%
Key stage 2 - attainment	KS2 L4+ Reading, Writing & Maths	69%	78%	8	88%	73%
	KS2 L4+ Reading	82%	89%	6	95%	86%
	KS2 L4+ Writing	77%	85%	7	91%	82%
	KS2 L4+ Maths	83%	87%	6	94%	82%
	KS2 K4+ Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling	69%	76%	8	83%	72%
Key stage 2	KS1-2 Expected progress in Reading	86%	92%	3	94%	88%

- progress	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Reading	27%	38%	1	38%	28%
	KS1-2 Expected progress in Writing	88%	95%	1	95%	90%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Writing	29%	35%	1	35%	26%
	KS1-2 Expected progress in Maths	86%	91%	4	93%	85%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Maths	26%	32%	7	40%	26%
Key stage 4 – attainment	KS4 5+ GCSE's A*-C (Incl. E & M)	52.7%	59.2%	6	64.5%	47.6%
	KS4 5+ GCSE's A*-C	79.6%	65.6%	7	73.0%	58.8%
Key stage 4 - progress	KS2-4 Expected progress in English	63.7%	78.3%	2	79.9%	65.1%
	KS2-4 Expected progress in Maths	67.5%	68.5%	5	74.6%	58.0%
Absence	Overall Absence Primary (Autumn and Spring Terms)	4.84%	3.83%	6	3.27%	4.48%
	Overall Absence Secondary (Autumn and Spring Terms)	5.25%	4.53%	1	4.53%	5.66%

Maldon District Summary

Measure		Maldon Performance		2014 comparisons		
		2013	2014	Maldon District Rank (1 = Best Performance)	Highest District	Lowest District
OFSTED	Primary - Good or Outstanding (Overall grade) 31 st August	65%	69%	9	96%	56%
	Secondary - Good or Outstanding (Overall grade) 31 st August	100%	100%	1	100%	43%
EYFSP	EYFS Good Level of Development	54%	67%	1	68%	57%
Phonics	Year 1 Phonics (required level)	72%	77%	4	81%	68%
Key stage 1	KS1 L2B+ Reading	81%	84%	3	87%	76%
	KS1 L2B+ Writing	69%	73%	2	77%	64%
	KS1 L2B+ Maths	83%	83%	2	87%	76%
Key stage 2 - attainment	KS2 L4+ Reading, Writing & Maths	74%	77%	10	88%	73%
	KS2 L4+ Reading	87%	89%	6	95%	86%

	KS2 L4+ Writing	83%	83%	11	91%	82%
	KS2 L4+ Maths	83%	85%	10	94%	82%
	KS2 K4+ Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling	74%	75%	9	83%	72%
Key stage 2 - progress	KS1-2 Expected progress in Reading	89%	91%	6	94%	88%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Reading	31%	34%	2	38%	28%
	KS1-2 Expected progress in Writing	92%	92%	7	95%	90%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Writing	27%	26%	12	35%	26%
	KS1-2 Expected progress in Maths	86%	87%	10	93%	85%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Maths	27%	32%	7	40%	26%
Key stage 4 – attainment	KS4 5+ GCSE's A*-C (Incl. E & M)	54.5%	51.9%	11	64.5%	47.6%
	KS4 5+ GCSE's A*-C	79.3%	59.7%	11	73.0%	58.8%
Key stage 4 - progress	KS2-4 Expected progress in English	68.2%	71.6%	10	79.9%	65.1%
	KS2-4 Expected progress in Maths	69.2%	61.1%	11	74.6%	58.0%
Absence	Overall Absence Primary (Autumn and Spring Terms)	4.78%	3.84%	7	3.27%	4.48%
	Overall Absence Secondary (Autumn and Spring Terms)	7.00%	5.25%	9	4.53%	5.66%

Rochford District Summary

Measure		Rochford Performance		2014 comparisons		
		2013	2014	Rochford District Rank (1 = Best Performance)	Highest District	Lowest District
OFSTED	Primary - Good or Outstanding (Overall grade) 31 st August	61%	52%	10	96%	56%
	Secondary - Good or Outstanding (Overall grade) 31 st August	75%	75%	1	100%	43%
EYFSP	EYFS Good Level of Development	56%	62%	5	68%	57%
Phonics	Year 1 Phonics (required level)	70%	78%	2	81%	68%
Key stage 1	KS1 L2B+ Reading	83%	81%	8	87%	76%

	KS1 L2B+ Writing	70%	68%	8	77%	64%
	KS1 L2B+ Maths	82%	81%	6	87%	76%
Key stage 2 - attainment	KS2 L4+ Reading, Writing & Maths	73%	81%	4	88%	73%
	KS2 L4+ Reading	87%	93%	2	95%	86%
	KS2 L4+ Writing	81%	86%	4	91%	82%
	KS2 L4+ Maths	85%	91%	2	94%	82%
	KS2 K4+ Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling	75%	78%	5	83%	72%
Key stage 2 - progress	KS1-2 Expected progress in Reading	85%	92%	3	94%	88%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Reading	22%	33%	5	38%	28%
	KS1-2 Expected progress in Writing	87%	93%	4	95%	90%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Writing	22%	27%	11	35%	26%
	KS1-2 Expected progress in Maths	84%	92%	2	93%	85%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Maths	23%	34%	4	40%	26%
Key stage 4 – attainment	KS4 5+ GCSE's A*-C (Incl. E & M)	60.6%	63.5%	3	64.5%	47.6%
	KS4 5+ GCSE's A*-C	80.0%	69.8%	4	73.0%	58.8%
Key stage 4 - progress	KS2-4 Expected progress in English	64.0%	77.7%	3	79.9%	65.1%
	KS2-4 Expected progress in Maths	77.6%	71.4%	2	74.6%	58.0%
Absence	Overall Absence Primary (Autumn and Spring Terms)	4.40%	3.35%	2	3.27%	4.48%
	Overall Absence Secondary (Autumn and Spring Terms)	5.92%	5.04%	5	4.53%	5.66%

Tendring District Summary

Measure		Tendring Performance		2014 comparisons		
		2013	2014	Tendring District Rank (1 = Best Performance)	Highest District	Lowest District
OFSTED	Primary - Good or Outstanding (Overall grade) 31 st August	49%	56%	12	96%	56%

	Secondary - Good or Outstanding (Overall grade) 31 st August	50%	43%	12	100%	43%
EYFSP	EYFS Good Level of Development	50%	58%	11	68%	57%
Phonics	Year 1 Phonics (required level)	61%	70%	11	81%	68%
Key stage 1	KS1 L2B+ Reading	77%	76%	11	87%	76%
	KS1 L2B+ Writing	61%	64%	12	77%	64%
	KS1 L2B+ Maths	76%	76%	11	87%	76%
Key stage 2 - attainment	KS2 L4+ Reading, Writing & Maths	65%	73%	12	88%	73%
	KS2 L4+ Reading	78%	86%	12	95%	86%
	KS2 L4+ Writing	76%	82%	12	91%	82%
	KS2 L4+ Maths	78%	82%	12	94%	82%
	KS2 K4+ Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling	64%	72%	12	83%	72%
Key stage 2 - progress	KS1-2 Expected progress in Reading	81%	88%	12	94%	88%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Reading	24%	32%	6	38%	28%
	KS1-2 Expected progress in Writing	85%	92%	7	95%	90%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Writing	24%	29%	8	35%	26%
	KS1-2 Expected progress in Maths	79%	85%	12	93%	85%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Maths	20%	26%	12	40%	26%
Key stage 4 – attainment	KS4 5+ GCSE's A*-C (Incl. E & M)	61.0%	52.4%	10	64.5%	47.6%
	KS4 5+ GCSE's A*-C	86.5%	62.4%	8	73.0%	58.8%
Key stage 4 - progress	KS2-4 Expected progress in English	75.4%	79.9%	1	79.9%	65.1%
	KS2-4 Expected progress in Maths	70.3%	61.2%	10	74.6%	58.0%
Absence	Overall Absence Primary (Autumn and Spring Terms)	5.49%	4.48%	12	3.27%	4.48%
	Overall Absence Secondary (Autumn and Spring Terms)	6.43%	5.60%	11	4.53%	5.66%

Uttlesford District Summary

Measure	Uttlesford Performance		2014 comparisons		
	2013	2014	Uttlesford District	Highest	Lowest

				Rank (1 = Best Performance)	District	District
OFSTED	Primary - Good or Outstanding (Overall grade) 31 st August	89%	80%	3	96%	56%
	Secondary - Good or Outstanding (Overall grade) 31 st August	75%	75%	9	100%	43%
EYFSP	EYFS Good Level of Development	54%	65%	2	68%	57%
Phonics	Year 1 Phonics (required level)	74%	81%	1	81%	68%
Key stage 1	KS1 L2B+ Reading	87%	85%	2	87%	76%
	KS1 L2B+ Writing	75%	72%	4	77%	64%
	KS1 L2B+ Maths	86%	83%	2	87%	76%
Key stage 2 - attainment	KS2 L4+ Reading, Writing & Maths	81%	88%	1	88%	73%
	KS2 L4+ Reading	90%	95%	1	95%	86%
	KS2 L4+ Writing	88%	91%	1	91%	82%
	KS2 L4+ Maths	89%	94%	1	94%	82%
	KS2 K4+ Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling	77%	83%	1	83%	72%
Key stage 2 - progress	KS1-2 Expected progress in Reading	89%	94%	1	94%	88%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Reading	29%	34%	2	38%	28%
	KS1-2 Expected progress in Writing	94%	95%	1	95%	90%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Writing	33%	35%	1	35%	26%
	KS1-2 Expected progress in Maths	91%	93%	1	93%	85%
	KS1-2 More than expected progress in Maths	32%	40%	1	40%	26%
Key stage 4 – attainment	KS4 5+ GCSE's A*-C (Incl. E & M)	64.3%	63.7%	2	64.5%	47.6%
	KS4 5+ GCSE's A*-C	78.0%	71.3%	2	73.0%	58.8%
Key stage 4 - progress	KS2-4 Expected progress in English	68.1%	71.6%	9	79.9%	65.1%
	KS2-4 Expected progress in Maths	75.9%	70.0%	4	74.6%	58.0%
Absence	Overall Absence Primary (Autumn and Spring Terms)	4.38%	3.38%	3	3.27%	4.48%
	Overall Absence Secondary (Autumn and Spring Terms)	6.13%	4.97%	3	4.53%	5.66%

This report was written by

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		AGENDA ITEM 6
		PAF/06/15
Committee:	People and Families Scrutiny Committee	
Date:	12 March 2015	
<u>An Overview of 2014 Educational Achievement in Essex</u>		
Enquiries to:	Pippa Shukla Lead Strategic Commissioner – Intelligence Education and Life Learning - People Commissioning 03330136605 pippa.shukla@essex.gov.uk	

1. Purpose of the report: Scrutiny of educational performance

This report presents educational outcomes for children and young people in Essex primary, secondary and special schools for the academic year ending summer 2014, covering Early Years Foundation stage, Key Stages 1, 2, 4 and 5. It includes an update on absence levels and those young people not in education, employment and training (NEETs), as well as an overview of specific cohorts of pupils.

It also covers Ofsted inspection outcomes, as at the end of academic year 2013/14, and an overview of trends in 2014/15 to date.

The Annex appended to this report sets out the detailed data overview across key stages and pupil groups.

2. Background

Essex's Lifelong Learning strategy launched in 2013 set out the authority's vision and key measures for the next five years:

- Every school in Essex to be at least a good school;
- To ensure outcomes for children and young people are in the top quartile nationally;
- To reduce the gap in achievement between children and young people from deprived backgrounds and their peers, in line with the highest performing 25% of local authorities nationally.

These priorities formed the basis for the Council's Outcome 3 Commissioning strategy – People have aspirations and achieve their long term ambitions through education, training and lifelong learning, adopted by the Council in February 2014.

The strategy sets out the ambition that these priorities outlined above will be achieved by 2018.

This report summarises the progress in improving educational attainment and progress, supported by a detailed analysis set out in the appendix, and in progressing towards the targets as set out in the Commissioning strategy.

3. Introduction

In the academic year 2013/14, Essex finalised examination results show the gap is reducing to top quartile authorities, with Essex maintaining or improving at most key stages. Performance for the key attainment indicators matches or is above national averages at Early Years Foundation stage and key stage 1; matches national average at key stage 2, apart from progress from KS1 – 2 in writing and maths (being just 1% point below); and almost matching the national average for the key GCSE threshold measure of 5+ A*-C including English and maths (just .3% below at 56.5%).

For vulnerable groups, the gaps between their achievement and that of all children is closing, but for some it remains wide, particularly for children with special educational needs (excluding statemented children) and children in care (CiC). The gaps for disadvantaged children (ie on free schools meals for last six years and CiC) reduced at both key stage 2 and 4 this year.

At the end of the academic year 2013/14, there was a 3 percentage point improvement on per cent of children attending good and outstanding schools (4% in primary and 2% in secondary). Of those schools inspected, over two thirds sustained or improved their grade, with under a third falling by a grade. Over half of those schools (56%) inspected received a grade of good or outstanding, below the national average of 63%.

This year's report includes quartile positions comparing Essex to all other authorities:

- Essex's performance for most indicators at Early Years and key stage 1 places it in the second quartile;
- at key stage 2 in the third quartile for almost all indicators, although this masks the significant improvement made in ranking position for the key threshold measure of Reading, writing and maths level 4+ which is now 69, from 90 last year;
- at key stage 4, rankings in the second quartile for GCSE 5+ A*-G including English and maths and for expected progress in English KS2-4, with the other indicators being in the third quartile, apart from the English Baccalaureate indicator which is in the 4th quartile;
- at key stage 5, Essex features in the top quartile for 3+ A grades and for average point score.

4. Overview of results and measures to address school improvement

Ofsted performance scores

- 74% maintained schools and academies in Essex were deemed good or outstanding at the end of 2013/14 (62% in 2011/12). Nationally, 81% of schools were good or outstanding at the end of 2013/14 (70% in 2011/12).
- 74% of pupils in Essex attended a good or outstanding primary school at the end of 2013/14 (62% in 2011/12).
- 74% of pupils in Essex attended a good or outstanding secondary school at the end of 2013/14 (60% in 2011/12).
- At the end of the 2013/14, 74% of primary, 70% of secondary, and 89% of special schools in Essex were judged to be good or outstanding (compared to 62%, 55% and 89% respectively in 2011/12). Nationally 81% of primary, 70% of secondary, and 90% of specials were judged to be good or outstanding at the end of the 2013/14.
- Of the 33 primary schools inspected during the autumn 2014 term, 82% were rated good or outstanding. 6 secondaries were inspected, with 67% being good or outstanding.

Essex schools are responsible for their own improvement. The expectation is that all schools will monitor and evaluate the quality of education they provide and the standards they achieve for all children. ECC aims to work in partnership with all Essex schools in the essential task of raising standards and narrowing the achievement gap between different groups and individuals.

There have been marked successes over the past two years, particularly in respect of schools graded requires improvement and inadequate. Essex was cited in the recent Chief Inspector's 2013/14 Annual report for bucking the trend, in comparison with stalling national secondary performance. However significant challenges remain for those schools who have received a second judgement of 'requires improvement' and those who have not been able to maintain their 'good' judgement.

The Standards and Excellence service have clear processes and protocols to RAG rate all schools, enabling a clear prioritisation of intervention and support to be established for under-performing schools and appropriate commissioning for support undertaken. Support is prioritised for schools requiring improvement and in a category; however these are supplemented by visits to good and outstanding schools to enable more collaborative working and sharing of good practice.

The service works closely with the DfE and Regional Schools Commissioner to share intelligence about the performance and progress of academy trusts in Essex, and the East of England region have recently agreed an ambition to ensure that no academy or free school will be judged less than good by July 2016.

In addition, a number of warning notices (25) were issued to schools performing under the floor standards or linked to a breakdown in leadership during the 2013/14 academic year, which has enabled a quicker prioritisation of actions to strengthen those schools over the year.

The focus on three locality areas (Tendring, Harlow and Basildon) and collaborative District partnerships have continued in the last year and led to sustained improvements across these 3 areas. The Basildon Excellence Panel has set challenging targets for 2017, and results improved in all key measures across the primary phase; with Basildon now being one of four districts with no primary schools deemed by Ofsted to be inadequate. Similarly for Harlow, the number of good and outstanding schools is 57%, up from 41% in 2012. The Chief Inspectors report highlighted Burnt Mill Academy as an example of an outstanding secondary school serving one of the most deprived areas in the East of England. For Tendring, 73% of pupils achieved level 4+ for KS2 RWM (an increase of 8% points from 2013).

5. Overview of results and measures to address pupil outcomes

5.1 Early Years

- Essex Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) attainment for a Good Level of Development was 61% in 2014, above the national average of 60%. This was an eight percentage point rise on 2013 performance.
- Essex ranking has improved from 107th in 2012 to 57th in 2014 under the new framework, and has sustained performance in the second quartile group.
- Writing remains the learning goal needing improvement; however levels in Essex are 1% point above national averages.

Improvements in the EYFSP data have been seen this year across schools in all districts of Essex, further to clear prioritisation and targeting of interventions by the Early Year's Quality Improvement service. This work has involved an increased focus on locality data sets, including EYFSP and GLD, being shared with schools, pre-schools and Children's centres, promoting local ownership and shared responsibilities for children's attainment at the end of EYFS. The impact of earlier interventions is beginning to emerge, including early language and communication programmes, such as Talk, Listen, Cuddle (TLC), the focus on school readiness projects in hotspots around the county, which are helping children to be ready to

learn and acquire new knowledge and understanding, as well as strengthening the links between the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) and maintained sector.

Ongoing work is in place to focus on specific early learning goals with under achievement compared to national and Essex data, which require additional support, such as writing, particularly in relation to the gender gap in attainment. This has been further supported by a collection of on entry data and planned work with children centres and the PVI sector.

The EYFS Profile moderation process continues to be robust and confirmed in the letter of approval to the LA by the Standards Testing Agency (STA), and includes additional support sessions for the early learning goals linked to Literacy and Mathematics.

Work is also underway to prepare for the changes in the assessment framework, with the commencement of Baseline Assessment from September 2015.

Priorities and ambitions for the early year's sector are set out in Outcome 1 of the ECC Commissioning strategy – The Best Start in Life. A commissioning review of early years services is taking place, reviewing priorities and targeting of resources to support early years providers in PVIs and the maintained sector for families with children aged 0 – 5 years. The early year's pupil premium for disadvantaged 3 and 4 year olds is also being rolled out across early year's settings from April 2015, in addition integrated 2 year old checks being introduced from September 2015 which will enable early identification and support packages to be put in place to enhance a child's health, wellbeing and educational attainment.

5.2 Year 1 Phonics

- 74% of pupils are working at the required level in 2014, an increase of 20 percentage points from 2012 (54%).
- Essex ranking has improved to 74th (from 99), and now matches the national average, with a move into the third quartile.

Reviews of phonics provision are commissioned for individual schools which has supported the sustained improvement seen across schools and improved outcomes.

5.3 Key Stage 1

- Since 2011, Essex has seen 6% point improvements in Reading and Writing, with 3% point improvement in Maths for pupils achieving level 2+.
- Higher rankings were achieved this year (Reading 26th, Writing 66th) and a dip in rankings for Maths to 34rd. Essex has sustained its position above the national average for all three subjects, and was at the top of the second

quartile for Reading and Maths, and the third quartile for Writing.

- Essex exceeds or matches the England average in all subjects, bar writing, for pupils working securely (level 2B+), although remains slightly below statistical neighbour averages.

Support for a range of reading and writing programmes for schools has been provided by Essex Education services. Specific programmes included:

- Every Child a Reader (ECaR): with the deployment of 2 expert teacher leaders to provide support for individual schools on a termly basis.
- Universal access training for early reading and phonics including training Teaching Assistants to deliver specific intervention programmes
- Support quality first teaching in the classroom has also been provided.

Work is ongoing across infant and junior schools to ensure assessments at key stage 1 provide a secure platform for making at least expected progress at key stage 2.

5.4 Key Stage 2

- Essex matches the national and statistical neighbour averages for the key threshold measure Reading, Writing, Maths (RWM) combined measure at 79% (ranking of 69th – over 20 places above last year's ranking of 90th). This improvement means that over 900 more pupils achieved a level 4+ in reading, writing and maths in 2014 compared to 2013.
- Essex is in the 3rd quartile (with rankings of 64th to 95th), for all KS2 attainment indicators and bar one progress indicator. Expected progress in writing is the only measure in the bottom quartile now with a ranking of 115.
- 83 Essex schools had 90% or more pupils achieving level 4+ in RWM, 13 of whom had 100% of all pupils achieving this level.
- The number of schools classed as 'below floor target' has reduced to 19 in 2014 (from 44 in 2011, 31 in 2012 and 30 in 2013).

Primary schools are supported by the Standards and Excellence Primary Commissioners (SECs) and Essex Education services (EES) to ensure additional support is targeted to those schools not performing in line with age related expectations for pupils for reading, writing and maths.

The Chief Inspector's Annual report this year highlighted the positive performance in Essex at key stage 2. For the key threshold measure of Level 4+ for reading, writing

and maths combined – Essex is just 3% points below the top quartile threshold – which equates to about 450 pupils.

One school improvement strategy undertaken last year which had good impact on overall outcomes was a programme to target additional funding to the schools with the largest cohorts and where performance was not in top quartile.

Each school worked with 8 to 12 pupils who had the potential to achieve L4+ in reading, writing and mathematics but required additional teaching and personalised tuition in one or more of the subjects. 33 schools participated in the programme, and an impressive 163 children out of the 272 targeted children (representing 60% of the targeted pupil group) achieved a Level 4+ in combined RWM. The net effect of 163 more children achieving a L4+ in RWM was an uplift of 1% on the overall Essex result.

The programme will be re-run this year, but the focus will be on targeting funding to schools to close the achievement gap for disadvantaged pupil groups.

Commissioned support, including that provided by EES, is being targeted at raising standards in English (writing) and maths as appropriate and those key areas identified by the commissioned review of issues raised in recent Essex Ofsted reports: most significantly, featuring subject leadership, marking and feedback, and middle leadership. The following are examples of support programmes to schools undertaken in 2013/14:

- Raising achievement in writing – a 3 day central programme supported by in school visits;
- Moving on with maths: programme and school visits;
- Developing subject leadership: programme and school visits
- Marking and feedback : tailored support for individual schools to build capacity for assessment leaders;
- An extensive programme of Local Authority reviews (30 per term) continues and has been re-commissioned for this year;
- Pupil premium reviews are also commissioned for individual schools as identified by SECs.

The above, and other developmental support for governors to ensure robust governance arrangements are in place, have supported the increases in good and outstanding Essex schools seen over the last year across both the primary and secondary sector.

5.5 Key Stage 4

- In 2014, a new framework was introduced, with changes to equivalent qualifications that could be included and a change to recording the 'first' result, rather than the 'best' result. A number of Essex schools were

particularly affected by the iGCSE changes.

- Results from 2013 are not comparable, Essex at 56.5% is just slightly below the national average of 56.8%, with a slight fall in ranking to 85th (from 81st), remaining in the third quartile.
- Essex is in the second quartile for 5+ A* to G inc English and maths, and for expected progress from KS2 – 4 in English, ranking 63rd and 67th respectively.
- 8 Essex schools were below the key stage 4 floor standard. Each of these schools are regularly visited and closely monitored by the Secondary SECs. Most of these schools are academies so there are joint approaches with the sponsor, DfE and Regional Schools Commissioner to challenge and address underperformance.

Secondary schools are supported by the Secondary SECs who ensure additional support is targeted to those schools considered to be under performing. They have actively utilised the strengths of particular schools to provide additional capacity, support and examples of great practice that all should aspire to in order to meet Essex's goals. SECs work closely with the DfE and Regional Schools Commissioner where academies are under performing.

The Six Schools Programmes being rolled out this year to improve the quality of teaching and learning and leadership and management, are targeting schools requiring improvement, and those identified as needing more support. This includes school on school collaborations, and work supported by the Teaching School Alliances. The percentage of secondary schools judged by Ofsted to be good or better has risen to 76%.

Subject Excellence networks have been set up across the county which are allowing staff in all subject disciplines to see, to hear about and discuss best practice in their areas of expertise. The Teaching School Alliances have been commissioned to lead this initiative. Best practice visits have been commissioned by the SECs to raise aspirations. Getting staff at all levels to believe they can achieve more remains a key challenge. Almost all of our Secondary Ofsted graded RI schools have accepted the opportunity to join the HMI Ofsted Triad project beginning spring term 2015.

The Family of Similar Schools approach undertaken over the last 2 years is being supplemented with a regional approach, which will enable Essex schools to be part of a family with Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and Norfolk schools.

5.6 Key Stage 5 and Post 16

- Essex maintained schools and academies are above national averages (for schools) for all KS5 headline performance measures including top quartile

performances for several measures. This is despite Essex having slightly below average prior attainment on entry to KS5.

- Essex has four of the top 31 schools in the Country for A level results (including two in the top ten) with Colchester Royal Grammar school the very top school.
- Despite a national trend for A level average points per candidate (for schools and colleges) reducing over the last several years, Essex's relative position remained very good at 728.4 points – well ahead of the national average of 714.0. Essex was ranked 31st nationally on this measure (in the top quartile) and top of our statistical neighbour group.
- Essex also performs well for higher-achieving students – the % of students in schools obtaining three or more A level grades at A*/A was 12.0% 1.7% above the national average placing Essex 28th (in top quartile).
- For the second year in a row, the attainment of Essex students in vocational qualifications was above the school and college national average, both in terms of the average point score per entry (+3.6 points above national average) and the average point score per vocational student (+2.7 points)
- There have been significant reductions in NEETs and unknown averages compared to last year (NEETs 4.6% compared to 5.7% in 2012/13; and 5.0% for unknowns compared to 7.9% last year, and 18.4% in the previous year).

Collaborative networks across sixth forms and the college sector supported by Secondary SECs are enabling closer working and sharing of good practice. These networks are also linking to Universities to help raise aspirations and help students progress to their next stage of education. The level of engagement of schools and colleges at these networks is very high.

Use of 'Alps' data and other intelligence has enabled suitable challenge of underperformance and has resulted in the majority of students in Essex being set aspirational targets equating to the top 25% (or higher) of value added performance. The Essex monitoring project is helping providers to target students in the post 16 sector who need additional support. 'Alps' national comparisons show that Essex has been performing at the level of the top 25% of providers for A level 'value added' for the past four years.

In September 2014 Ofsted introduced a separate judgement for school sixth forms. In inspections that have occurred in Secondary schools so far this academic year all sixth forms have been judged as 'good'.

A focus on creating training and sustainable employment opportunities, has included incentivised apprenticeships, work experience schemes, as well as stimulating interest in key growth sectors, for example STEM based careers. A skills evidence report commissioned by the employment skills board has supported the drive towards apprenticeships for specific skills.

The Chief inspector's Annual report for 2013/14 cited ECC's data sharing protocol with schools, colleges and learning providers which enables information on the cohort of potential learners, levels of attainment and aspirations to be shared with providers. Providers are then able to respond to learner needs more effectively and to further reduce the proportion of NEETs or unknowns.

5.7 Pupil groups

- The gap in performance between FSM (Free school meals) and non FSM pupils is seen across all key stages (21% difference at EYFSP, 19% at key stage 2, and 25.6% at key stage 4).
- Disadvantaged pupils at key stage 2 achieved in line with national averages (66% achieving level 4+ in RWM compared to 67% nationally), below the 82% achieved by non-disadvantaged pupils; and at key stage 4 (35.4% achieving 5+ A* - C including English and Maths compared to 36.7% nationally), again below the 62.3% achieved by non- disadvantaged pupils.
- In line with national averages, girls outperform boys at all key stages, with the largest gap at EYFS at 17%, same as the national gap.
- Pupils with SEN in Essex tend to perform below national averages across all key stages, although pupils with statements do perform better in some subjects, including maths at both KS1 and KS2. The gap between Essex pupils with SEN not statemented and their national counterparts at key stage 1 and 2 ranges up to 4% points.
- White British pupils had improved levels of attainment in 2014, performing above the national average for White British pupils for the EYFSP, and at key stage 1 reading and maths. At key stage 2 however, their performance was the lowest of the other ethnic groups for reading and writing. At key stage 4, 56% of white British pupils achieve 5+ A*-C including English and maths, with only Black pupils having a lower average (53.7%).
- Essex Children in Care (CiC) exceed national averages for CiC at key stage 1 in Reading (7%), Writing (13%) and Maths (2%), however were below CiC national averages for key stage 2 (by 8% in RWM combined). 8.5% of Essex CiC pupils achieved 5+A* - C GCSEs including English and Maths, below the national CiC average of 12.1%.

A range of conferences and support packages have been rolled out by EES to showcase evidence based practice around the use of Pupil Premium, and to support Pupil Premium reviews.

Pupil premium reviews are available at no cost where commissioned for Grade 4 and RI schools by SES and also as a universal traded service. Take up is increasing. A 'best practice' case study publication has been commissioned and will be launched at an Essex wide conference on 24 March 2015.

A range of good practice Pupil Premium toolkit, templates and resources are being developed for sharing across the Schools Intranet.

Data analysis is being used to identify those schools with largest FSM gap in outcomes achieved in order to target support, as well as those who support their FSM cohort to achieve good outcomes to share good practice.

The five year Special Educational Needs (SEN) strategy launched in January 2014, included a range of measures to ensure improved teaching and learning for pupils with SEN. SEN Commissioners work with range of Educational Psychologists, Specialist Teachers etc to target those schools where pupils with SEN underperform. New programmes have been initiated by the SECs to enable innovative and excellent practice to be shared, including:

- School led innovation initiatives across clusters; featuring the SEND Innovation Project and the Maximising the Impact of TAs (MITA) Programme
- A range of school leadership initiatives such as the Super-SENCo pilot project and the Special School Leaders of the Future programme;
- School Offer development - supporting schools to improve the range and effectiveness of their provision in collaboration with parents and pupils, in line with the Local Offer

The development of best practice is working in conjunction with the expansion of specialist SEN provision across Essex in line with increasing need.

The Achievement service for Children in Care (CiC) provides a range of support to the CIC cohort, to ensure they are appropriately supported in school. The intervention strategy has had more impact in primary schools where progress data is good and higher proportions are attending good or outstanding schools. Attendance remains high and there continue to be no permanent exclusions, with a reduction in fixed term exclusions.

5.8 Absence

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School absence in Essex was 5.4% for 2012/13 across all state funded schools and academies. 4.7% of children were 'Persistent absentees', |
|---|

missing 15% or more of possible session during the year.

- Provisional primary school overall absence rates for 2013/14 suggest absence rates have fallen to 3.8% (from 4.7% in 2012/13).
- Provisional secondary school overall absence rates for 2013/14 suggest absence rates have fallen to 5.2% (from 6.1% in 2012/13)
- Rates for persistent absence are in line with national averages (primary 3% and secondary 6.4% for 2012/13).

The Education Welfare service has been working with health partners to develop communication materials to encourage good attendance and reduce absence for illness. Good practice conferences for schools have also been run to share practice across schools and enable schools to understand their data trends compared to Essex averages.

6. Priorities for 2014/15

Progress was achieved in all three priority areas in the ECC Commissioning Strategy Outcome 3:

- Every school in Essex to be at least a good school;
- Outcomes for children and young people are in the top quartile nationally; and
- Reduce the gap in achievement between children and young people from deprived backgrounds and their peers, in line with the highest performing 25% of local authorities nationally.

There was a 12 percentage point increase in the proportion of pupils going to a good or outstanding school in 2013/14. However Essex remains below national averages at primary, so this remains a priority for 2014/15.

The top quartile positions for A levels have been sustained; measures for early years and key stage 1 are well embedded in the second quartile. The ranking positions for key stage 2 significantly improved although Essex remains in the third quartile; and there were two second quartile measures for key stage 4, with the remainder being almost all within the third quartile. Achieving top quartile performance remains a key priority.

The gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils is closing at key stage 2; however Essex remains above the national average. Whilst Essex gaps still tend to be higher than nationally, the 2014 KS4 reforms appear to have contributed towards reducing the difference between Essex and England. This remains a priority for 2014/15, along with improving outcomes for pupils with SEN and CiC.

Key areas of focus for school improvement for 2014/15 include:

- Working with schools and school organisations to develop a co-constructed strategy to develop cluster working and effective locality partnerships to achieve greater geographical consistency and improved outcomes across the county, as outlined in the ECC Commissioning strategy for educational achievement;
- Working with the DfE Regional Schools Commissioner to support underperforming academies;
- Working with EES to pilot the School Effectiveness Plus system for up to 100 primary schools;
- Working with schools to launch the Raising the Achievement of Disadvantaged pupil's strategy and good practice materials; and
- Supporting schools through inspection to secure good Ofsted outcomes.

APPENDIX 4

Briefing Paper: Educational Attainment in Harlow

Introduction

In 2013 Harlow Council undertook a Scrutiny Review of educational attainment. The review included analysis of performance information and data; analysis of current arrangements for supporting schools; interviews with a wide range of professionals and an analysis of academic research into the causes of poor aspirations and low attainment. The review was led by Professor David Hawker who subsequently made a number of recommendations in relation to early years, school age and post school education. Professor Hawker proposed a new educational achievement partnership led by Harlow Council and the introduction of a 'Harlow Pledge' aimed at systematically improving the quality of education across the district so that Harlow could become one of the best places in Britain for children to grow up in.

The inaugural meeting of the Harlow Strategic Partnership for Educational Attainment (HSPEA) took place on 8 July 2013 and, in recognition of Professor Hawker's recommendations, it was agreed that there would be a partnership approach to address key identified issues under three main work streams:

- Early Years and School Readiness
- Schools Improvement
- Post-school Opportunities

The Chief Executive of Harlow Council is the Chair of the HSPEA which meets approximately every six weeks. Partners receive regular update reports on all three work streams to evidence partnership working, project delivery and positive outcomes for Harlow children, young people and families.

The context of Harlow

Provided below are some statistics to provide the context for educational attainment and progression in Harlow:

Schools

In September 2014 Ofsted ratings for Harlow Schools was as follows:

Primary (Infant and Junior)	Secondary	Special and Private
1 Outstanding 13 Good 8 Requires Improvement 4 Inadequate 1 Awaiting inspection	1 Outstanding 3 Good 0 Requires Improvement 1 Inadequate	- Outstanding 1 Good - Requires Improvement - Inadequate

There are currently 35 schools in Harlow (March 2015) – one special school, one free school (Aspire Academy), one private school, five secondary schools/academies and 27 primary schools/academies.

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)

The EYFSP assesses children's development at age five based on prime and specific areas of learning, with assessments undertaken through classroom and playground observation.

In 2013 only 38% of Harlow children were assessed as having a Good Level of Development (GLD). This increased by 21% in 2014 to 59% but remained 1% below National and 2% below the Essex average. See comparison chart below:

GLD	National	Essex	West	Harlow
2013	51%	52%	49%	38%
2014	60%	61%	62%	59%

Harlow has seen the largest percentage increase of all District Council areas in Essex since 2013 and has moved up two places in the District Council area ranking from 12th to 10th place.

In 2013, when compared with other District Council areas in the West Quadrant, Harlow was 18.8% behind Uttlesford and 16.3% behind Epping Forest. However, in 2014 Harlow closed the gap within the quadrant considerably and is now 6.6% behind Uttlesford and 3.4% behind Epping Forest.

The issue of children not being fully 'ready' to start school at age five was highlighted very early on in Professor Hawker's review in 2013. As a result Harlow primary schools were having a harder job ensuring that children still met the expected standard by the time they were ready to transfer to secondary school at age 11. Four key weaknesses were identified during the review:

1. A weakening in the scope and effectiveness of the children's centres because of budget reductions.
2. A weakening of the multi-agency work at neighbourhood level.
3. Variable and often poor quality early years provision with little opportunity for working across providers to improve quality.
4. Variable and often poor liaison between pre-school providers and schools, leading to loss of continuity in children's and families experiences.

'School Readiness' was therefore identified as a priority work stream for the HSPEA and both Harlow Council and Essex County Council agreed to contribute £50,000 a year for two years (2013/14 and 2014/15) to move this important area of work forward. **Harlow Council has committed a further £50,000 per year for a further three years and hopes that Essex County Council will do so as well.**

Key Stage 2

At Key Stage 2, the key measures now are:

1. The percentage of children achieving level 4 or above in both English and Maths.
2. The percentage of children who make expected progress (defined as two national curriculum levels) since age 7.

According to floor standards, a primary school will be said to be underperforming if:

- Fewer than 65% of pupils at the end of key stage 2 (KS2) achieved level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths, and
- The school has a below median score (94%) for the percentage of pupils at the end of KS2 who made expected progress in reading, and
- The school has a below median score (96%) for the percentage of pupils at the end of KS2 who made expected progress in Writing, and
- The school has a below median score (93%) for the percentage of pupils at the end of KS2 who made expected progress in maths.

The comparative performance in Harlow is provided below:

	% of pupils achieving Level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths				% of pupils making expected progress in 2014		
	2014	2013	2012		Reading	Writing	Maths
England – All Schools	78%	75%	75%		97%	93%	89%
Local Authority – Essex	79%	75%	74%		91%	92%	89%
Harlow – All Schools	78%	75%	75%		91%	93%	89%

% of pupils achieving reading, writing and maths (2014)				
	Level 3 or below (Below expectations)	Level 4 or above (At level expected)	Level 5 or above (Above expectations)	Average point score
England – All Schools	6%	78%	24%	28.7
Local Authority – Essex	6%	79%	24%	28.2
Harlow – All Schools	6%	78%	24%	28.7

Harlow comparisons

Harlow KS2 results increased in 2014 compared to the previous two years. There are now 78% (+3% more) pupils achieving Level 4 or above (i.e. meeting expectations) in reading, writing and maths. This is also a similar percentage with the county and national averages. 24% of pupils achieved level 5 and above (i.e. exceeded expectations) in reading, writing and maths.

GCSE

At GCSE, the key measures are:

1. The percentage of students who achieve good grades (C or above) in at least 5 subjects, including English and Maths.
2. The percentage that has made the expected progress in English and Maths.
3. The percentage who achieve the newly defined 'English Baccalaureate' (Grade C or above in English, Maths, a Science, a foreign language and a humanities subject).

The majority of pupils are expected to achieve grade C or above in at least 5 subjects, including English and Maths. The comparative performance for Harlow is provided below:

	2012	2013	2014	English	Maths	
England – All Schools	59.4%	59.2%	53.4%	NA	NA	22.9%
England – State funded Schools	58.8%	60.6%	56.6%	71.6%	65.5%	24.2%
Local Authority – Essex	59.0%	60.5%	56.5%	72.8%	65.5%	19.9%
District Council – Harlow	59.4%	59.2%	53.4%	NA	NA	24.2%

According to floor standards, a secondary school will be said to be underperforming if:

- Fewer than 40% of pupils achieve five or more GCSEs at grade A*-C or equivalent, including GCSEs (or iGCSEs) in both English and mathematics.

- The school has a below median score (74% in 2014) for the percentage of pupils making expected progress between key stage 2 and key stage 4 in English.

- The school has a below median score (67% in 2014) for the percentage of pupils making expected progress between key stage 2 and key stage 4 in mathematics.

Local issues affecting Harlow

Schools that are inadequate requiring improvement - in September 2014 Ofsted judged eight Harlow primary schools as requiring improvement and four as inadequate. More must be done to support schools to improve and to develop the leadership, skills, governance and approach to performance necessary. Establishing a new Harlow Education Improvement Partnership (see Schools Improvement below) is a good step in the right direction in responding to these challenges. HSPEA and the Council are keen to see the impact that the Partnership will have on supporting schools on their improvement journey.

More work is required to illustrate to the community more effectively:

- 1. How these schools are being challenged, changed and improved.*
- 2. The effectiveness of plans to address the causes of the inadequacy/need for improvement within defined timescales and how the learning from improvements achieved is being used to create sustainable and on-going improvement.*
- 3. How the progress that these schools are making to address the causes and outcomes of their inadequacy/need for improvement are being communicated to all stakeholders in the community that they serve.*
- 4. How the needs of students from these schools are being addressed to prevent the inadequacies of their school experience providing them with a legacy of under-achievement.*

Teacher recruitment – there have been concerns expressed about the ability of some Harlow schools to recruit and retain teaching staff of the quality and experience required. Delays in recruitment or the inability to recruit the staff required increases pressure on existing staff in schools that are already struggling. It is also the case that frequent changes of teaching staff in the form of temporary staff to cover vacancies can lead to instability for children and families. This can affect learning outcomes.

More work is required to understand:

- 5. The nature, level, location and causes of teacher recruitment and retention issues.*
- 6. The approaches necessary to address their causes with particular reference to experience in other areas of the country.*

7. *The action that is being taken to develop action plans for schools to address their specific teacher recruitment and retention issues and how they are planning for the future.*

Intergenerational issues – there continue to be issues regarding children growing up in families where education has not been a priority and parental encouragement and aspiration is low. Parental approaches to education and lifestyle can create barriers to the development of aspiration in children. Children growing up in families where parenting skills are poor and parents themselves lack basic skills can lead to poor levels of school readiness and subsequent inadequate academic progression.

More work is required to:

8. *Learn from the success of the Harlow approach, to extend the approach to all parts of Harlow and to learn from other areas in tackling school readiness.*
9. *Develop further a cross-cutting approach to improving the health and wellbeing of families using school readiness as a key proxy.*
10. *Ensure that the partnership working outside of schools, as well as within them, addresses the aspiration of parents for their children, their parenting skills and supports family learning.*
11. *Identify how 'hard to reach' parents can be engaged and motivated to address the needs of their children.*
12. *Engage with students to learn more about their views on aspiration and their perceptions of the barriers to educational attainment/progression.*
13. *Identify how the issues in (12) above can be addressed and the channel of communication to students be improved.*

Meeting the needs of businesses - employers require people with the education and skills to meet their business needs and aspirations. Frequently local people do not have the higher level educational attainment, skills and experience to take the opportunities that exist in Harlow currently. It is also the case that through the Enterprise Zone and other regeneration initiatives high level, high reward jobs are being created through inward investment that local people will require higher levels of educational attainment to access.

Whilst significant progress has been made through the provision of a university centre, a university technical college and the improvements achieved by Harlow College and some schools much more is required.

Investment is required to:

14. *Extend the portfolio of courses offered by the university centre in Harlow relevant to current and future businesses and its recruitment of local and other students.*
15. *Develop further the relationships between the university, the university technical college, Harlow College and the schools in Harlow to provide clearly defined and effective pathways for local students.*

16. *Change perceptions about the educational attainment and opportunities in Harlow to attract students from outside of Harlow and to reduce the 'leakage' of Harlow students to other areas.*
17. *Change perceptions about the educational attainment and opportunities in Harlow to remove barriers to employers and employees moving to Harlow.*
18. *Further improve the engagement of Harlow businesses in improving educational attainment and ensure that the business 'assets' of Harlow are pooled as far as practically possible to create a network of learning and development opportunities for local students.*
19. *Encourage more students to consider STEM subjects.*

Other activities

The Council has created the Harlow Young People's Fund to:

1. Support Harlow's young people identify and fulfil their own potential.
2. Help young people gain the education and skills necessary to share in the success of the town.
3. Develop to be focussed citizens contributing to the town.

The Young People's Fund was started with a contribution from the Council's Chief Executive to fund and to deliver the Harlow Educational Progression Awards. The Awards evening held in November 2014 saw students of varying abilities nominated by their schools receive awards in recognition of their commitment and attitude to learning and their academic progress between Key Stages. The Council has now committed £50,000 per year for three years to continue with the School Readiness Project and is approaching local businesses and partners for contributions.

What next?

Below are the actions (taken from the paper above) that the Council believes need to be carried out specifically in Harlow. The Council recognises that the socioeconomic context and challenges in different communities in Essex may require different approaches but the Council hopes that the learning from Harlow can inform the approaches to the contexts and challenges in other communities.

Harlow related actions:

Schools that are inadequate or requiring improvement

More work is required to illustrate to the community more effectively:

1. *How these schools are being challenged, changed and improved.*
2. *The effectiveness of plans to address the causes of the inadequacy/need for improvement within defined timescales and how the learning from improvements achieved is being used to create sustainable and on-going improvement.*

3. *How the progress that these schools are making to address the causes and outcomes of their inadequacy/need for improvement are being communicated to all stakeholders in the community that they serve.*
4. *How the needs of students from these schools are being addressed to prevent the inadequacies of their school experience providing them with a legacy of under-achievement.*

Teacher recruitment

More work is required to understand:

5. *The nature, level, location and causes of teacher recruitment and retention issues.*
6. *The approaches necessary to address their causes with particular reference to experience in other areas of the country.*
7. *The action that is being taken to develop action plans for schools to address their specific teacher recruitment and retention issues and how they are planning for the future.*

Inter-generational issues

More work is required to:

8. *Learn from the success of the Harlow approach, to extend the approach to all parts of Harlow and to learn from other areas in tackling school readiness.*
9. *Develop further a cross-cutting approach to improving the health and wellbeing of families using school readiness as a key proxy.*
10. *Ensure that the partnership working outside of schools, as well as within them, addresses the aspiration of parents for their children, their parenting skills and supports family learning.*
11. *Identify how 'hard to reach' parents can be engaged and motivated to address the needs of their children.*
12. *Engage with students to learn more about their views on aspiration and their perceptions of the barriers to educational attainment/progression.*
13. *Identify how the issues in (12) above can be addressed and the channel of communication to students be improved.*

Meeting the needs of business

Investment is required to:

14. *Extend the portfolio of courses offered by the university centre in Harlow relevant to current and future businesses and its recruitment of local and other students.*
15. *Develop further the relationships between the university, the university technical college, Harlow College and the schools in Harlow to provide clearly defined and*

effective pathways for local students to support aspiration and educational attainment.

- 16. Change perceptions about the educational attainment and opportunities in Harlow to attract students from outside of Harlow and to reduce the 'leakage' of Harlow students to other areas.*
- 17. Change perceptions about the educational attainment and opportunities in Harlow to remove barriers to employers and employees moving to Harlow.*
- 18. Further improve the engagement of Harlow businesses in improving educational attainment and ensure that the business 'assets' of Harlow are pooled as far as practically possible to create a network of learning and development opportunities for local students.*
- 19. Encourage more students to consider STEM subjects.*

In addition to the above the following actions are suggested for consideration to tackle and improve educational attainment in both Harlow and the other communities in Essex.

- 20. Improve the identification and dissemination of best practice, wherever it is to be found, to all schools and support/encourage its use consistently to inform and develop actions to improve educational attainment.*
- 21. Encourage and support school governing bodies, as custodians of the education of the students attending their schools, to develop, where it currently does not exist, the willingness and ability to hold to account the leadership of their schools for the educational attainment of the students.*
- 22. Encourage all schools to commit to being held to account by the representatives of the communities that they serve (Essex County and the District Councils) for the educational attainment of their students.*
- 23. Increase the pooling of expertise and experience amongst the teachers for the benefit of all schools.*
- 24. Ensure that the educational progression of students is identified, evaluated and communicated more effectively as part of the definition of success in improving the educational attainment in schools.*

Conclusion

Educational attainment and progression are crucial for the success of individuals and communities. The Council is fully committed, as community leader, to supporting all educational institutions, individuals and families in improving aspiration, educational progression and educational attainment. Whilst recognising that there is still much to do to get to the position that the Council would like all educational institutions to be at in terms of the educational attainment and progression of students in Harlow, it believes that the progress made to date should not be overlooked. Success, as well as challenges still to be faced, needs to be acknowledged. Many schools and teachers do a tremendous job and illustrate their commitment and professionalism every day for the benefit of their students.

The Council's strap line: Working together for Harlow, represents its approach and its commitment to support tackling the challenges and barriers to improving educational attainment and progression in Harlow.

Malcolm Morley
Chief Executive

15 April 2015



**REPORT TO THE ECC PEOPLES &
FAMILIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT TASK AND
FINISH GROUP
23 APRIL 2015**

1. Background

Tendring experiences a number of challenges which impact on educational performance, including inward migration and difficulty recruiting and retaining teaching staff. The area has high levels of unemployment, with an often transient population reliant on seasonal employment. There is a need to raise aspirations amongst local young people and within families in order to improve educational performance, including the removal of barriers to higher education for students.

In 2012, Tendring District Council (TDC) expressed concern to Essex County Council (ECC) as to the quality of primary education in the area. By the end of 2011/12 academic year, a number of primary schools were in special measures. Educational performance in Tendring was significantly below the average for the rest of Essex. As a result, Tendring District Council has taken a partnership approach to addressing educational attainment and related issues for schools in the area. The three key drivers in this respect are:

- Tendring Locality Board
- Tendring Education Improvement Group (TEIG)
- Tendring Education and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2. Tendring Locality Board

Membership of the Board comprises all ECC Members for Tendring, TDC Cabinet Members and the Cabinet Member from ECC allocated to Tendring. Recently, representation from the Tendring District Association of Local Councils was also included within the membership; thereby bring together all three tiers of local government. The Board meets approximately every two months and is chaired by Cllr Kevin Bentley, Deputy Leader of ECC. The Locality Board provides a high level steer to shape the future of the locality and delivers a co-ordinated public service approach across a number of key County and District services and projects. This enables joined up delivery of key services within a wide range of partners.

Joint locality boards have been set up across Essex. In Tendring, Harlow and Basildon the boards have focused on educational improvement as a work stream. Through this focus by the Locality Board the Tendring Education Improvement Group (TEIG) was established in October 2013 with the responsibility for supporting improvement in the quality of education for children and young people across the Tendring District.

3. Tendring Education Improvement Group

Members of the strategic group include Essex County Council and Tendring District Council, Primary and Secondary Head Teachers and Tendring Education Trust (the local collaborative trust established by schools in the district). The group has had a positive impact on the working relationship between Essex County Council, local schools and Tendring District Council. The partners within the TEIG work together to bring their collective effort, energy and experience to address challenges faced by schools, including early year's provision and governance arrangements. It was accepted that the greatest impact would be secured by focusing on jointly agreed aspects as opposed to tackling the wider agenda as a whole

3.1 The aims of the TEIG are:-

- For every primary school in Tendring to be judged at least securely good by Ofsted by 2017
- For all schools and their communities to hold the highest aspirations for Tendring children and to ensure that outcomes for children across Tendring increase year on year towards being in line with the top 25% national outcomes
- To narrow the performance gaps for “disadvantaged” children in Tendring so that they are at least in line with national expectations

3.2 The key responsibilities of the TEIG are:

- To champion educational improvement and raising aspirations for all pupils across the Tendring District.
- To capture and disseminate best practice across the area groups within Tendring.
- To work with schools to tackle areas of difficulty faced including:
 - educational achievement
 - school leadership
 - teacher recruitment
 - issues brought by a transient population
 - To pool resources and coordinate support for maximum impact.
 - To learn from best practice across the country.

The Tendring Locality Board oversees the work of the TEIG, and receives regular updates on progress made against targets.

4. Tendring Education and Skills Committee

Tendring District Council (TDC) established the Education and Skills Committee in 2014 to support the Council's community leadership role in respect of improving the aspiration and attainment of young people in the District.

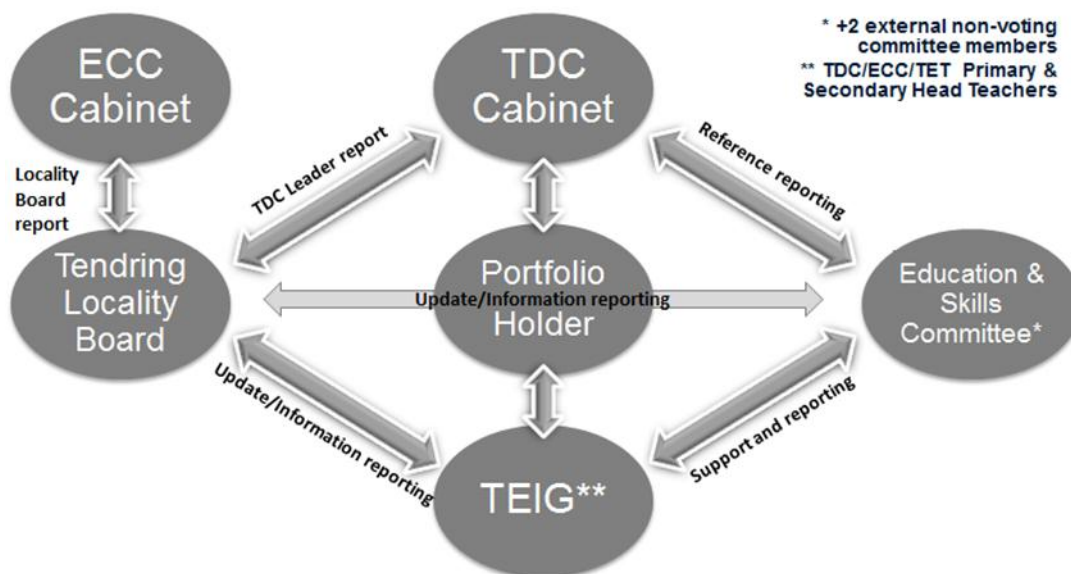
4.1 The Terms of Reference of the Committee

- Reviewing the key drivers that impact the educational attainment and aspirations in Tendring, including:
 - School performance in its wider remit (including how to support the recruitment and retention of teachers in Tendring schools);
 - School readiness of young people (including reviewing support that can be given to families);
 - The impact of migration into the District and contributory Council policies;
 - The roles of partners, including the business sector, in supporting schools;
 - Supporting the recruitment and training of school governors; and
 - The way partners work together to provide improved access to careers information to young people.
- Reviewing the work undertaken by the Council, including within its partnership activities to develop the skills of those that live and work in the District.

4.2 The Committee's Work Programme for 2015

Meeting date	Topic
22 June 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting recruitment and retention of teachers in Tendring. Review of Secondary Schools. Review of how partners work together to provide access to careers information to young people.
21 September 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of work undertaken to address entrenched worklessness and improve skills of those living in the District. Review of recruitment and training of school governors. Review of Colleges. Review of Tendring Children and Young People's Strategy.
30 November 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of support given to families in Tendring to ensure School Readiness of children. Review of attainment figures. School attendance, the impact on attainment and what partners can do to support schools.

5. Reporting flow chart of the functions



6. Success of the Partnership Approach

Significant progress has been made since the TEIG partnership was formed. Since 2012, results at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved by 12%. Although results are still below the county average, the model has supported schools in becoming more self-sufficient in respect of their improvement programmes. Some schools had initially been reluctant to join the partnership, although confidence and momentum has built over the past year as the benefits of partnership working have become clear. Confidence in ECC and local schools to deliver an effective improvement programme has also increased. Essex County Council and Tendring District Council have jointly congratulated local schools on their improvement. Moreover, since the partnership had been formed, media coverage of local education provision has improved which is crucial in developing confidence in local education provision.

The partnership arrangements between Tendring District Council and Essex County Council provide the opportunity to share local knowledge, examples of good practice and for TDC to inform future education plans for the District. TDC has supported ECC in its interventionist activities in failing schools and a number of successful joint initiatives to improve governance arrangements in schools and early year's provision in the area have also been developed through the partnership.

BRITISH CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

skills & employment manifesto

January 2014

2

There is no quick fix and few easy answers when it comes to increasing the skills of the existing workforce or to transforming the systems that educate and train young people, but Accredited Chambers of Commerce are ideally placed to work with partners at the heart of the solution. The Chamber Network has unrivalled experience of working in partnership with local educational institutions, supporting employers to invest in the skills they need, and delivering welfare-to-work and enterprise programmes. **Last year, Chambers ran 2,719 courses for 20,110 participants, delivered 3,476 apprenticeships and brokered a further 868.** Most Chambers work with local schools, colleges and training providers, and many deliver employment programmes, such as the Work Programme.

This manifesto seeks to break the cycle of different organisations and sectors blaming each other, and instead identifies solutions. Although it focuses primarily on young people's transition from education to employment, we will publish further recommendations in 2014 to support employers to improve the skills of their workforce, and to help jobseekers who currently lack the skills to find employment.

We invite partners to work with us in the coming months and years to refine and implement workable long-term solutions at national and local levels. We commit to build on the existing local skills and employment services offered by Chambers of Commerce to identify opportunities for consistent national delivery.

The two most urgent priorities for governments across the United Kingdom should be

- Careers education, starting in primary school, including the development of 'employability' skills and quality employer contact.
- Helping SMEs to invest in apprenticeships and workplace training, using Chambers of Commerce and other local bodies to encourage and support companies' aspirations.

Although skills and education policy are devolved, this manifesto deals with challenges that exist across the UK and is designed to assist all governments. The ideas within it can be adapted to fit local, national and regional structures.

3

Preparing young people for work

The UK must protect and build on its success in producing world-leading thinkers, leaders and innovators while catching up with other countries' ability to train for technical and employment skills. Young people should leave the education system with a career direction that is relevant to them, realistic expectations about entry level jobs, and the attitude, passion, skills and experience that employers want. This demands an education and training route that meets the needs of local labour markets as well as the informed personal aspirations of individuals. Qualifications must be consistent and clear to enable employers to understand an individual's competencies.

Training for the workplace – More power to employers

With 70% of the adult workforce already in employment, we need to ensure that the skills system (privately and publicly funded) focuses its resources to meet the present and future needs of employers. We also need a system that ensures employees, where appropriate, can gain qualifications on-the-job, which demonstrate their competencies. Employers need support to invest in appropriate training for their workforce and information about providers', courses and qualifications that makes sense to the average businessperson. This is particularly important if we are to encourage more SMEs to invest in training.

Making the unemployed attractive to business

Despite record numbers of people in work, unemployment, particularly long-term, remains too high, threatening business competitiveness. With increasing numbers of people returning to the labour market, it is vital that pre-employment support includes skills training that is driven fundamentally by local jobs and the skills employers are looking for. There should be a clear separation between those who are work-ready and those who are not, and between support for jobseekers and welfare conditionality. The accelerating changes to the economy mean that career as well as job changes are not only likely but also desirable. Quality careers advice should be available throughout working lives for those in and out of work.

Skills are the currency of the 21st century economy, and it is the extent to which the UK is able to offer a more highly skilled workforce than its competitor countries that will determine our future prosperity. Individuals must ensure they are able to deliver the higher value work and productivity to justify the increased costs associated with living in the UK or face the consequences of trying to compete for work on price alone; and employers unable to access the skills they need or those unwilling to invest in training their existing workforce will lose business to other firms at home and abroad. Government must listen to the repeated calls from business to ensure that education and skills providers are focused on what employers need. Unfortunately, the current trajectory is ominous. Although there are excellent examples of world-class practice among British schools, colleges, universities, training providers and employers, too many people lack the basic skills to succeed at work, let alone possess the higher skills required to underpin our national prosperity. The recent OECD adult skills report showed that in just two generations the average UK worker has lost significant ground to other developed countries when it comes to the skills that employers value. The ageing workforce threatens a significant and permanent loss of skills and knowledge that requires immediate and urgent attention. All levels of government, employers and education leaders must work together to deliver a workforce with the skills, knowledge, experience and attitudes to compete in the 21st century.

A matter of urgency

The world has changed dramatically in recent decades. The global economy is no longer divided between a few developed countries with a monopoly on high value work and the vast majority of nations largely confined to low value work.

Preparing young people for work

Employers understand the business case for recruiting young people, but often struggle to identify individuals with the skills and attitude required in the workplace. To prepare young people for their adult lives, schools must combine their focus on academic rigour with strong vocational training opportunities and better preparation of all young people for the realities of work. This will require coordinated interaction with employers.

The Basics

Employers do not expect the education system to produce fully-formed skilled workers, but they are clear about the basic building blocks they require when recruiting for entry-level roles. All young people must demonstrate functional literacy and numeracy, which should include maths, English¹, computer skills and a foreign language. Employers repeatedly tell us that they also want school leavers to demonstrate passion, discipline and an ability to learn.

Business wants schools and colleges to develop in their students the soft 'employability' skills that will enable them to function within an organisation and interact with managers, colleagues, customers and suppliers. It is also essential that young people have a good understanding of the options available to them and realistic expectations about entry-level jobs and future progression.

Publicly funded education providers respond to the different performance indicators set by each government, including league tables, short-term destination measures and inspections. These must be adapted as quickly as possible to make the employability of every young person a key measurement of success in order to allow principals to allocate appropriate resources to prepare all pupils for their working lives. Given a little help, many employers are willing to support schools to provide an insight into different sectors and job functions, as well as quality work experience.

Contact with employers can give studies additional relevance and help embed soft skills. Chambers of Commerce can facilitate and support these interactions, and with proper funding and incentives to bring more businesspeople into the classroom, this could transform the UK labour market and boost UK productivity.

Qualifications

Qualifications only have value if they can be interpreted by their end user – the individual's future employers. Many employers are confused by the wide range of different qualifications and frequent changes to the system by successive governments, and struggle to equate particular grades with skills relevant to their business. • Qualifications regulators must ensure greater consistency over time of the competency and knowledge required to achieve a given qualification.

- Teachers should be supported to relate knowledge and skills learnt in the classroom to real world uses. This will improve learner motivation in the classroom, future career direction and enable them to explain better what they can offer a potential employer
- Competency-based grades should be accompanied by a percentile rank to provide employers with a clearer indication of each individual's relative performance.

Functional skills (literacy, numeracy, digital literacy and foreign languages)

Functional skills are the basic practical skills required to be effective in the workplace and are therefore relevant to every business when recruiting a new member of staff. The existing graded qualifications in these subjects do not help employers to understand whether individuals have the practical literacy, numeracy, digital or language skills required to function effectively at work. Individuals are branded for life by the grades they achieve at school with little opportunity or incentive to improve those grades.

The functional skills indicator should consist of pass/fail exams at different levels of competency, similar to the well-understood music certification system or the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, with a single awarding body. This would provide consistency and stability, and would make it easy and attractive for individuals (or their employers) to invest in training to improve these vital functional skills beyond school. As the principal indicator of an individual's literacy, numeracy, computer skills and applied foreign language skills, the indicator would also form the English and maths elements of 'Technical' and 'English' Baccalaureates in England. Additional academic or vocational qualifications could co-exist for related subjects, such as English literature, statistics and computer science.

- The government should investigate clawing back a portion of a school's funding for each student that leaves it without achieving a minimum competence in these functional skills. This could then be reinvested in future remedial training in these subjects.

Soft 'employability' skills

Soft skills are the personal attributes that facilitate modern work. They characterise how an individual interacts with others and with institutions, and a necessary complement to functional and other hard skills.

- The remit of the education inspectorates across the UK must be changed to place a greater emphasis on schools' efforts to develop soft 'employability' skills including team working, time management, resilience, flexibility, problem-solving and communication skills. Many schools and colleges already do this to a high level, but too many young people are let down by weaknesses in how they organise themselves and interact with others.
- Schools should be measured against the number of times an average pupil experiences quality contact with a business (work experience, work tasters, company visits, visits by an employer to the school etc). Increased contact for employers with young people will increase their propensity to hire from this group. Chambers of Commerce stand ready to work with schools to facilitate these contacts and provide support to ensure quality.

Careers education

Our current training system relies on individuals to assess both their own strengths and likely employer demand for particular skills, and then to choose training relevant to a particular profession. It doesn't work. Inadequate careers information, advice and guidance means that few young people are able to make an informed decision based on the full range of opportunities available to them, and many focus on skills that are poorly matched to demand from employers. Business has had enough of this broken system and calls for urgent reform. Careers education must include regular contact with employers.

- Careers education should start in Key Stage 2 and build to form a statutory element of secondary national curriculums. Every young person should gain work experience of different lengths in different sectors. Chambers of Commerce can facilitate these placements with local and national businesses.
- Publicly funded careers services should be fully extended to cover anyone over the age of 13, including face-to-face advice.
- National Insurance numbers should be used to track the average earnings of each school's alumni as a proxy for success in the labour market.
- 'Destination measures' should be extended to include longer-term outcomes. Although there is value to understanding the destination of students after 12 months, this encourages some schools to find any destination rather than the right one for each individual. Destination measures should be extended to show five-year destinations.

The governments should recognise the special status of these core functional skills with the introduction of a universal qualification or indicator that is simple to understand and relates directly to day-to-day tasks.

7

Enterprise

Young people must leave full-time education with an understanding of how to apply ideas in a commercial manner. Every young person should receive basic business and financial education during Key Stage 3, culminating in a business project (setting up and running a business as part of a team, studying a local business or completing a project to benefit a local business).

Higher education

The UK's universities perform a vital function educating the next generation of innovators and leaders who will be the future drivers of economic growth. While this manifesto focuses on the parts of the education and skills system that are not delivering the right outputs to meet the needs of employers, government must support our leading universities to protect and build on their successes.

- Universities and Chambers of Commerce (and LEPs in England) should work together to improve understanding between the business community and university management and staff, in particular ensuring alignment of skills development with local economic need and linking graduates to local job opportunities.
- Chambers, universities and student unions should work together to promote enterprise among a wider range of university students. In England, LEPs can help to focus student enterprise on areas where local companies have comparative advantage.
- The government should work with universities to incentivise a greater focus on the development of foreign language skills, and to increase the international mobility of students and lecturers. This should include clearer advice about accessing the increased Erasmus+ funding and support for UK students considering a period both within and outside the EU and for foreign nationals who want to study in the UK.
- Chambers can support universities to increase awareness among students of job opportunities in the local economy. In the West of England the universities and the business community have created a graduate recruitment portal (Graduate Talent West), which links graduates, local businesses and job vacancies.

² From P3 in Scotland

8

Training for the workplace – more power to employers

Employers are often unable to translate between the skills needs of their business and the training available for purchase. Those that do understand what they need and what is being offered often discover that there is a mismatch. Training providers and FE colleges have adopted an advisory role in order to sustain the market for their services, and without them doing this fewer employers would invest in formal training. However, the system of central contracts attached to government funding means that for-profit providers in particular are often unable to act as impartial advisers, and instead find incentives to provide 'popular' training courses.

- Government should give employers in England the choice between direct funding for apprenticeships through PAYE tax breaks and directing funding to their chosen training provider. In both cases there must be transparency about the cost of each apprenticeship and a properly functioning market between competing providers.
- Each of the national governments should support Accredited Chambers of Commerce to provide objective advice to employers about how they can use apprenticeships to grow their business and to advise on appropriate local training providers. This support and infrastructure is particularly vital to encourage more SMEs to invest in training. Chambers can help to balance sector and spatial approaches.
- Chambers should co-ordinate group purchasing consortia to ensure employers work together to negotiate lower costs.
- The principle behind the Employer Ownership of Skills pilots in England should be extended through a similar funding route based on competitive bidding to address particular sectoral and geographical skills needs. Unlike the pilots, this must be easy for SMEs to engage with and allow representatives of the business community such as Chambers, trade bodies and LEPs to bid on behalf of a consortium of SMEs in their area or sector.

9

Making the unemployed attractive to business

Employment policy led by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) remains too focused on welfare claimants rather than demand from employers. Many employers actively avoid government employment schemes due to previous bad experiences and confusion about what support is currently

available, and often do not view Jobcentre Plus as a route to recruit talented staff.

- A ll employment policy, including existing welfare-to-work schemes, should become the sole responsibility of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) to recognise that the solution must be demand-led. The DWP should retain responsibility to help those furthest from the labour market to progress until they are ready to seek work.
- BIS should focus on creating a simple, clearly communicable offer to employers, including recruitment support, that can accommodate new initiatives without undermining employers' understanding of the system.
- Universal Credit will change the role of Jobcentre Plus from its focus on benefit conditionality to employment advice, including progression for people who are already in work. These functions should be transferred to National Careers Services to ensure all engagement with universal credit recipients is focused on finding work and progression, rather than the existing culture of welfare conditionality box-ticking.
- Universal Jobsmatch should be managed by National Careers Services so that careers advice and job matching are available in one place.
- Jobseeker compliance must not be measured by outputs, as this can lead to large volumes of poor quality or unsuitable job applications. Not only do such applications create unnecessary work for businesses, but they also negatively affect employers' perception of unemployed jobseekers.
- Traineeships in England are designed to support 16-24 year olds who want to work but who lack skills and behaviours required to find a job or apprenticeship. Other nations offer similar schemes for school leavers. These initiatives should be extended to 15 year olds who are considered at high risk of becoming NEET. Schools are often able to identify individuals who would benefit from a different learning environment with greater immediate relevance to finding a job.

invest in the future

Chambers will continue to support firms to find the right training by the right provider. We will build on our existing partnerships at local, regional and national levels to implement local sustainable solutions that deliver better preparation for young people, and adult skills training that meets employers' business needs.

Governments across the UK must commit to work with business and the education and skills system to deliver training that employers value. The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) is calling on all political parties to make an explicit pledge that employability and real partnership with employers, should be at the heart of education and skills training. In particular, governments across the United Kingdom must:

- ensure all young people learn the soft 'employability' skills and benefit from employer contact and quality careers education while at school.
- Work with Chambers of Commerce to encourage and support more SMEs to invest in apprenticeships and workplace training.

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The British Chambers of Commerce is the national body for a powerful and influential Network of Accredited Chambers of Commerce across the UK, a network that directly serves not only its member businesses, but the wider business community. Representing thousands of businesses of all sizes and within all sectors, the British Chambers of Commerce is the voice of the 'real economy'.

Every Chamber sits at the very heart of its local community working with businesses to grow and develop by sharing opportunities, knowledge and know-how. No other organisation makes such a difference to business as the British Chambers of Commerce.

YOUNG ESSEX ASSEMBLY RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

At its Sub-Group meeting on Saturday, 4 July 2015 the Young Essex Assembly (YEA) Internal Communications Group formulated a response to the above Task and Finish Group report. The members of the YEA split into three groups to feedback on the actions and recommendations contained within the report, to consider whether they are, in the opinion of the YEA, relevant and achievable. Additionally, the sections in the report highlighting the Task and Finish Groups findings related to the Pupil Premium and the innovative use of it; and Early Years and whether current provision adequately prepares young children for formal education were considered. The three groups then came together to consider further work and contributions the Task and Finish Group might consider hearing from before the preparation of the final report in September 2015.

Recommendations and Actions

The group believed, in general, the recommendations and actions to be appropriate and achievable. However, with regard to the recommendation related to School Governors the group questioned whether school students are aware who the School Governors are and what they do? The group considered there could be a way found for governors to work with parents/carers; with a way forward suggested whereby governors attend parent evenings to raise awareness of what they do, and how they support the learning environment. Parents may find it helpful to hear from adults involved in the school who are not teachers.

With regard to the recommendation around the use of the Pupil Premium the group queried the use some schools make of the payments. For example the group questioned whether it appropriate to pay for music tuition which, maybe, only benefits a few students. The group felt it more appropriate to use the Premium for children with disabilities and learning difficulties to assist with progression.

Pupil Premium

The group found two schools, one on Gloucestershire and the other in Stockport which extend the use of the Pupil Premium to assist children of armed forces personnel. Some people do not claim free school meals, therefore, schools are missing out on unpaid Pupil Premium monies which could be used to positive effect.

If the electronic application form for prospective year 7 students included a line about whether parents are entitled to claim free school meals this might engender a greater response. This would ensure schools received their full Pupil Premium.

Do students who are absent from school receive the Pupil Premium? Reasons for absence could be varied.

Early Years

The group fed back that there should be standardisation of the monitoring of child development. Also conditions such as autism and Asperger's Syndrome are often not picked up at an early age.

The transition from pre-school into Year R can potentially be more difficult due to bullying issues. It is, therefore, likely that if a school has a pre-school linked to it the young children would be more familiar with each other leading to, potentially, less scope for bullying to arise.

On a wider context the group spoke of the environmental factors effecting the education of young people. The group raised the issue of bad behaviour being rewarded within schools.

There was a feeling that the more able pupils receive more attention in early years. More extra-curricular activities should be part of the Early Years programme allowing young people to be more engaged with education at this key point.

There should be a standardisation in the monitoring of child development. For example, conditions such as autism and Asperger's Syndrome are not always picked up at an early age.

There should be more checks should be done on summer-born children. There is too much disparity in the transition between pre-school and Year R.

The Group then considered further contributions the Task and Finish Group could have requested. The Group felt the following could have been consulted in preparation for the Final Report (in no particular order):

- Nursery providers: private and state
- Teachers and teaching unions
- School boards for early years
- Governors for schools
- PTAs
- Specialist schools (only know where to spend in own school)
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Academy schools
- Grammar and private schools
- Schools in low income areas and high income areas
- School councils
- Young people of all ages
- Youth parliaments
- The wider school community (including parents and residents)
- Faith and religious groups
- Duke of Edinburgh Awards scheme organisers
- The children's university programme
- Scouts and Guides groups and other voluntary services for young people
- Further education colleges
- Higher Education
- Alternative education
- Social services
- Disability friendly transport and schools
- Transport providers, in general, to ascertain whether school transport has an effect upon educational attainment?

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