

		AGENDA ITEM 6
		PAF/06/15
Committee:	People and Families Scrutiny Committee	
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<u>An Overview of 2014 Educational Achievement in Essex</u>		
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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 PVI 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

- 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.