

Children & Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2 March 2020



Education Attainment and Standards 2019

Report of John Pearce, Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this annual report is to provide a full summary of educational outcomes in County Durham, 2019, and related updates on the focus and provision of education services.

Executive Summary

2. Educational outcomes for Durham pupils continue to be positive with a small number of exceptions.
 - Early Years key outcomes for all children remain above national averages, but disadvantaged children are performing less well than their peers, despite a marked closing of the gender gap.
 - At Key Stage 1, Durham's children perform well against the key national indicators of 'at least expected standards' (EXS+) in Reading, Writing and Mathematics. At 'Greater Depth', continued improvement over a sustained period has ensured that outcomes are now marginally above national averages across headline measures.
 - At Key Stage 2, performance has exceeded the national averages in all key indicators except for reading. (age-related expectations: AS+). Although there is evidence of improvements in High Scores within mathematics, it is still in this area and reading, where work remains to be done by schools and those supporting them.
 - At Key Stage 4, a number of schools continue to show some significant improvements over the last 2/3 years. We have a group of consistent performers now who achieve in line with the best schools regionally. Whilst we are confident that some of our lowest performing schools have turned a corner and will benefit

from improvement initiatives with the DFE One Vision project, other positive indicators do not disguise the fact that further improvement is necessary.

- Key Stage 5 results continue to be above national averages for state funded schools, with an increased number of students achieving the higher grades in both academic and applied general qualifications. This continues to be an area of strength.

Recommendations

3. Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to note the information contained in the report.

Background

4. Improving educational outcomes for children and young people in Durham is a key priority of the County Council. Support to schools and settings in order that this is achieved, remains a prime focus of both the performance and standards and the professional support and development teams within the Education department.
5. The results from tests and examinations at the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4/5 for 2019, provide the key outcome measures for early years, primary and secondary education respectively. This report compares the performance of our schools and settings against national outcomes, to provide an indication of the context of these results.

Early Years outcomes

6. Early Years outcomes are measured by the percentage of children reaching a good level of development (GLD) according to national Early Years Profile criteria. At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are assessed by the percentage reaching a good level of development in relation to the Early Learning Goals. Assessments are made against pre-set levels, with internal and external moderation. Their themes include:
 - Communication and language
 - Physical development
 - Personal, social and emotional development (PSE)

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

7. Early Years Foundation Stage outcomes are as follows:

Early Years % GLD								
	2016		2017		2018		2019	
	Durham LA	National	Durham LA	Durham LA	National	Durham LA	Durham LA	National
All	69	69	72	69	69	72	71.8	71.8
Boys	62.3	62.1	65.0	62.3	62.1	65.0	65.6	65.5
Girls	76.2	76.8	79.6	76.2	76.8	79.6	78.3	78.4

8. As the table above indicates, Durham’s outcomes continue to improve and remain in line with national; Durham’s year-on-year improvement has been constant since 2014. With high levels of deprivation in parts of the County and the fact that Early Years outcomes were historically significantly below national outcomes prior to 2014, this represents a significantly positive picture. Our progress reflects the hard work of all Early Years settings, effectively supported by the local authority Early Years team.
9. The gap between disadvantaged children and all children, nationally and in Durham, has widened again. This is a priority for the Early Years improvement team and targeted work is being undertaken with schools and settings in order to close the vulnerable groups’ attainment gap as soon as possible.
10. The take up of the free Early Years entitlement for two-year olds has reached 89% in the last two years, compared with the national average figure of 72%. This was a government funded childcare initiative specifically targeted at reducing the early years attainment gap.

Key Stage 1 outcomes

11. In all key measures at Key Stage 1, Durham’s outcomes are above national, as the table below indicates:

	National	Durham
% Expected Standard Re, Wr, Ma	67%	68%
KS1 Expected standards (EXS+)		
Reading	75%	76%
Writing	69%	72%
Maths	76%	77%

12. Key Stage 1 outcomes have been a priority for the local authority in recent years from 2016. This improvement was sustained moving us into the 42nd percentile this year. This remains an area of performance in the County where ongoing attention is required, and scrutiny invited. Targeted support to schools where outcomes were below expectations, continues through our Monitoring and Intervention in Schools support within our Education teams.
13. In terms of 'GD', which indicates pupils working at greater depth within expected standards, Durham children at KS1 have improved over three years, with outcomes above national averages in all headline measures. This is a priority area for support across all key stages within the local authority and the challenge provided for our most able pupils throughout their time in our schools and settings.

GD	National	Durham
Reading	25%	26%
Writing	15%	17%
Maths	22%	23.0%

14. The phonics screening checks were introduced to identify the children who need extra help by their schools to improve their reading skills. The proportion of pupils meeting the required standard of phonic decoding by the end of year 1 was at 82% and matched that of the national average. Breaking this down further, 79% of boys achieved this milestone compared with 86% of our girls. By the end of year 2, 93% had achieved this compared with a national average of 91%. Boys at 91% and Girls at 95% comparing favourably with 89% and 94% respectively alongside national figures.
15. Our highest performing schools in terms of attainment at KS1, included: Sedgfield Hardwick Primary, Seaham Trinity Primary, St Margaret's C of E Primary, Belmont C of E and Burnopfield Primary.

16. Our highest performing schools in terms of progress at KS1, included: Finchale Primary, Sedgfield Hardwick Primary, Benfieldside Primary, Seaview and Burnopfield Primary.

Key Stage 2:

17. At the end of the primary stage of education (age 11) formal national assessments of pupils' attainment in mathematics and English take place through externally set and marked tests. Writing is judged by teacher assessments, moderated by the local authority against set national criteria. Assessments are made against "those meeting at least age-related expectations" (AS+) for this age group.
18. The table below sets out the percentage of pupils in Durham and nationally achieving KS2 AS+ in English (reading), English (writing), mathematics, grammar/punctuation/spelling (GPS) and RWM combined in 2018.

KS2 (AS+)	National	Durham
Reading (test)	75%	73%
Writing (teacher assessment)	78%	80%
Mathematics (test)	79%	80%
G/P/S	78%	79%
RWM combined	65%	65%

19. The proportion of pupils achieving age related expectation in reading dropped this year for the first time in over five years. Closer analysis of this from our education support teams, identifies non-fiction reading performance and is already being supported across a number of targeted schools.
20. The table below sets out the percentage of pupils in Durham and nationally achieving KS2 High Scores (HS) in English (reading), English (writing), mathematics, grammar/punctuation/spelling (GPS) and RWM combined in 2019.

KS2 (HS)	National	Durham
Reading (test)	27%	25%
Writing (teacher assessment)	20%	22%
Mathematics (test)	27%	24%
G/P/S	36%	33%
RWM combined	11%	10%

21. Attainment levels across the local authority continue to be very strong against national levels and the significant trend of improvement in Durham continues year on year. Where levels are below national averages (eg: High Score maths and reading), the local authority education support teams have targeted school improvement work in place.
22. Outcomes for Free School Meal pupils (FSM) indicate that Durham's schools continue to support our disadvantaged pupils well. The table below shows data for pupils who have been in receipt of FSM at any point during the previous 6 years (known as FSM ever-6 or FSME6). The table reflects the wider impact of reading scores.

KS2 (FSME6)	National 2019	Durham 2019
Reading	62	60.9
Writing	67	69.9
Mathematics	67.3	69.4
RWM combined	51.4	51.3

23. Whilst gaps with non-disadvantaged pupils nationally are reducing and comparisons with similar pupils nationally are positive, further steps to improve the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Durham will continue to be taken in future work planned between the school improvement teams and our settings.
24. Our highest performing schools in terms of KS2 attainment, included: Staindrop C of E Primary, New Seaham Academy, Coxhoe Primary, St Margaret's C of E and Green Lane C of E Primary.

25. Our highest performing schools in terms of KS2 progress, included: New Seaham Academy, Staindrop C of E Primary, Cleves Cross Primary and Nursery School Academy, Greenland Community and Coxhoe Primary.

Key Stage 4:

26. Assessment at Key Stage 4 continues to be through externally set and marked GCSE and GCSE equivalent examinations across a wide range of subjects and courses. Outcomes are graded by a numerical system involving points scores which has been applied comprehensively since 2017 (partially in 2016).
27. The DfE continues to advise that Progress 8, which is a relative measure, should not be compared year-on-year because the same score in different years could result from markedly different situations. As Progress 8 is cohort-driven, it does not serve as an effectiveness measure over time for schools or local authorities.
28. Outcomes remain below national averages across progress 8 and attainment 8 measures and have remained virtually static over a three-year period placing us in the lowest quintile nationally. Our contextual value-added data, however, over this period has placed our pupil outcomes in the top 20% of those achieved nationally. In summary, 8 of our secondary schools achieved above average progress 8 scores, 11 achieving average scores, 6 below average and 4 well below average.

KS4	2017	2018	2019	National 2019
Progress 8	-0.23	-0.23	-0.22	0
Contextual Value Added Progress 8	+0.14	+0.13	+0.15	0
4+ GCSE in both English and Maths	58%	61%	60%	65%
5+ GCSE in both English and Maths	35%	39%	38%	40%

29. Our lower achieving schools are currently being supported by a DfE initiative called Opportunity North East. The scheme supports the LA to accelerate progress in these schools using leaders from other high achieving schools and a financial grant of up to £280,000 to address their

individual improvement priorities. Currently Tanfield, Bishop Barrington, Greenfield and Durham Community Business College are being supported through this initiative.

30. Sedgefield at +0.51 was our most successful school in the progress 8 measure although The Academy at Shotton Hall, Dene Academy, Wellfield and St Bede's Peterlee are all worthy of mention as they all achieved scores in excess of +0.25, all above average scores with high proportions of disadvantaged children in their cohorts and all in the east of the county.
31. Outcomes for the Local Authority in key headline KS4 measures show that the improvements made in 2018 have been partially sustained in 2019. The proportion of pupils achieving levels 4-9 in English and maths moved from 57.5% in 2017 to 61.5% in 2018 and 60% in 2019. In summary, 15 secondary schools have achievement levels above national averages with Durham Johnston, Wellfield, Sedgefield and Framwellgate School, all 76% and above.
32. Similarly, at levels 5-9 outcomes improved from 34.5 % in 2017 to 38.5% in 2018 and 38% in 2019. In summary, 14 of our secondary schools are above national averages in this measure. Durham Johnston, Teesdale and St Bede's Peterlee are all 58% and above in this measure. Maths continues to be our priority for improvement around both teaching standards and the regional recruitment crisis in this subject.
33. Our progress gender gaps remain static too, males at -0.43 have slightly closed the gap on last year with their peers nationally who achieved -0.27. There continues to be large variations in progress 8 scores for different groups of pupils with white British males significantly underperforming nationally. Our females make positive progress, however, at +0.01, nationally this gender progress is stronger at +0.22.
34. In respect of Alternative Provision (the education provision made for those children who are not able to follow an educational pathway in a regular maintained school or academy), the attainment 8 scores of this growing group of children is below average and affects the overall performance across all pupils in County Durham. Significant proportions of disadvantaged pupils with enrolments within alternative provision and our pupil referral unit have had an impact upon attempts to diminish attainment gaps with other pupils nationally. A number of projects in

2019/20 have been introduced to increase the impact and accountability of these settings as part of a wider inclusion strategy.

35. Disadvantaged pupils who attend County Durham schools achieve close to the progress 8 national average for similar pupils nationally, scoring -0.49 on average compared to a national of -0.46. The attainment 8 score for this group of pupils matches exactly that of national comparisons at 36 points. Within Durham we have 9 secondary schools that exceptionally make positive progress with disadvantaged pupils.
36. Entry rates to the EBacc continue to fall locally but have remained static nationally. Only 32% of Durham pupils entered qualifications in all the relevant EBacc subjects, down from 34% in 2018 and 35% in 2016. The national average in 2019 was 40%. The largest fall in terms of entry for qualifications by Durham pupils in 2019 was in Languages; this is similar to the national picture. Schools and academies continue to struggle to recruit high quality teachers of MFL and continue to restrict their language offers further, mostly around Spanish and French options.
37. In relation to EBacc, the DfE's preferred key measure of performance has changed to an average point score in the last set of performance tables. By this definition of EBacc, the local authority's performance score is 3.76 compared to a national of 4.07. Whilst this performance area is not an LA strength, it should be noted that the authority has over 10 secondary schools which perform significantly above national averages and have strong curricular provision in this area.

Key Stage 5 results

38. AS levels, A levels and vocational qualifications have gone through major reforms in the last few years, however, performance comparisons are now more stable.
39. Applied General Qualifications have undergone significant change and there is now a much higher proportion of examination assessment, which has impacted on some candidates. The drop in APS (average points score) for this qualification, both nationally and in Durham, can be at least partially explained by this.
40. Achievement at AS level no longer contributes to an A Level qualification

41. Despite this, the results for County Durham students have strengthened in line with those of previous years. Our academic and applied general attainment continues to be above national figures for state funded schools with an increased number of students achieving the higher grades in both types of course. A-levels remain the dominant qualification taken in school sixth forms and the average grade achieved by Durham pupils has risen from C+ to B- across the full range of subjects studied.

Key Stage 5	2018 Durham	2018 National	2019 Durham	2019 National
APS per A Level entry	32.96	32.12	34.71	32.87
APS per Applied General entry	30.92	28.43	31.36	28.89
AAB or higher in 2 Facilitating subjects	15%	13.7%	18.3%	14.1%

42. Progress at A level is average or above average in 12 out of 15 schools, and average, above average or well above average for Applied General qualifications in the 12 schools where these qualifications are taken by students.
43. The highest progress scores at A-level are at Teesdale School and 6th Form, Durham Johnston Comprehensive School and Durham Sixth Form Centre.
44. The highest average point scores per A level were achieved in Durham Johnston and Teesdale, both being over 41 points per subject (B/B+).
45. In Applied General Qualifications highest progress scores are at Durham 6th Form Centre and St Bede's Catholic Comprehensive School and Byron College Peterlee.

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None

Finance

None

Consultation

None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None

Human Rights

None

Climate Change

None

Crime and Disorder

None

Staffing

None

Accommodation

None

Risk

None

Procurement

None

