

**Children and Young People’s Services  
Update: Education Attainment and Standards 2017 –  
Secondary School Outcomes**

**Report of Corporate Management Team  
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Services  
Councillor Olwyn Gunn, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children and  
Young People's Services**

**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with a summary of educational outcomes in County Durham, 2017, with a particular focus on KS4 as a priority area for intervention and improvement.

**Summary of outcomes – Early Years to Key Stage 2, and Key Stage 5**

- 2 Despite far-reaching changes to the curriculum, to methods of assessment and to examination specifications since 2014, the key outcome measures for early years, primary and secondary education are still determined by the results of annual tests and examinations. These, when compared to regional and national benchmarks, provide an indication of the performance of schools and settings.
- 3 Early Years outcomes, measured by the percentage of children reaching a ‘good level of development’ (GLD) according to national Early Years Profile criteria, show a steady year-on-year improvement in Durham since 2014:

Early Years % GLD								
	2014		2015		2016		2017	
	Durham LA	National						
All	57	60	64	66	69	69	72	70.7
Boys	48	52	56	59	62.3	62.1	65.0	64.0
Girls	66	69	72	74	76.2	76.8	79.6	77.7

- 4 Prior to 2014, Early Years outcomes were significantly below national averages, due in part to very low levels of speech and language development in some areas of highest deprivation. Current results are due to targeted support and intervention from the local authority Early Years team, which is regionally and nationally recognised, and focussed work of early years providers.

- 5 Against all national measures, children in the early years are performing well, with boys and girls improving at a consistent rate; the gender gap, a natural priority, is however broadly in line with the national average.
- 6 In all national measures at Key Stage 1, Durham's outcomes are positive:

	<b>National</b>	<b>Durham</b>
Phonics – Year 1	81.2%	<b>82.7%</b>
Phonics – Year 2	61.6%	<b>64.5%</b>

**KS1 Expected standards (EXS+)**

Reading	75.5%	<b>77.2%</b>
Writing	68.2%	<b>72.1%</b>
Maths	75.2%	<b>77.5%</b>
RWM	63.7%	<b>67.5%</b>

- 7 In terms of 'GDS', which indicates pupils working at greater depth within expected standards, Durham children at KS1 ranked higher than national averages in all measures, and significantly higher in maths:

<b>GDS</b>	<b>National</b>	<b>Durham</b>
Reading	25.2%	<b>25.8%</b>
Writing	15.6%	<b>16.5%</b>
Maths	20.5%	<b>22.5%</b>

- 8 Key Stage 1 outcomes rose above national averages for the first time in 2016, but have improved year-on-year since then. This improvement reflects consistent targeted support to schools where outcomes were below expectations.
- 9 Key Stage 2 average scores (AS) continue to be very strong against national levels, and the significant trend of improvement in Durham continues year on year as it has since before 2010.

<b>KS2 (AS)</b>	<b>National</b>	<b>Durham</b>
Reading (test)	71.4%	<b>73.1%</b>
Writing (teacher assessment)	76.8%	<b>78.8%</b>
Mathematics (test)	74.8%	<b>78.1%</b>
Grammar/Punctuation/Spelling	76.9%	<b>79.2%</b>
RWM combined	61.1%	<b>64.6%</b>

- 10 Attainment outcomes for Free School Meals pupils (FSM) indicate that Durham’s schools perform exceptionally well in supporting the education of our most vulnerable children. The table below shows data for pupils who have been in receipt of FSM at any point in the previous 6 years (known as ‘FSM ever-6’ or ‘FSM E6’):

<b>KS2 (FSM E6)</b>	<b>National</b>	<b>Durham</b>
Reading (test)	59.5%	<b>61.1%</b>
Writing (teacher assessment)	65.9%	<b>67.5%</b>
Mathematics (test)	63.4%	<b>65.9%</b>
G/P/S	66.4%	<b>68.5%</b>
RWM combined	47.3%	<b>50.0%</b>

- 11 At A-level (**Key Stage 5**) the general attainment for County Durham students in academic and applied subjects continues to be above national averages 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.
- 12 Progress at A level is average or above average in 11 out of 15 schools, and average or above average for Applied General qualifications in the 13 schools where these qualifications are taken by students. Attainment, which is generally measured by average points scores for A level (APS), is as follows:

<b>Key Stage 5</b>	<b>2016 Durham</b>	<b>2016 National</b>	<b>2017 Durham</b>	<b>2017 National</b>
APS per A Level entry	31.30	31.79	31.92	31.13
APS per Applied General entry	37.84	34.70	39.55	35.69
AAB or higher in 2 Facilitating subjects	17%	17%	17.1%	14.3%

#### **Outcomes in Key Stage 4:**

- 13 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. These were previously graded from A\*-G with national benchmarks of achievement, but a new numerical system involving points scores was introduced in 2016 and applied comprehensively from 2017. This is explained more fully in the box on the following page:

## GCSE performance measures

**Attainment 8** is the total of points awarded to a pupil across 8 qualifications.

- x2 – English and Maths which are double-weighted
- 3 highest points scores for Ebacc subjects (science subjects, computer science, history, geography, and languages).
- 3 highest points scores for any 3 other subjects

**Points:** A\* - 8; A - 7; B - 6; C - 5; D - 4; E - 3; F - 2; G - 1

**Progress 8** is based on a calculation of pupils' performance across the same 8 qualifications. It uses a baseline of Key Stage 2 results.

eg: a pupil with an average points score of 27 (Level 4b in reading, writing and maths) is calculated as attaining 50 points in A8.

If they get more it registers as a positive Progress 8 score – if less, a negative.

- 14 Due to this fundamental change, the Department for Education has advised that attainment outcomes in 2017 are not comparable with results in previous years, and that Progress 8, which is a relative measure and is cohort-driven, does not serve as an effectiveness measure over time for schools or local authorities.
- 15 The best attempt possible at reaching a comparison with schools' performance in previous years is to set the 'Basics' measure for 2017 against the % of pupils achieving A\* - C English and Maths in 2016 and previous years. This is not an exact correlation, but enables a discussion of evaluation to take place between the local authority and schools.
- 16 What this tells us is that while, according to this measure, there was a small improvement nationally for pupils, outcomes in Durham fell significantly. In 2016, Durham was broadly in line with national on this and other measures, although a disappointing response to the new English qualification introduced in 2015 had seen Durham's GCSE outcomes fall that year below national for the first time since 2010. However, the recovery in 2016 was not sustained, with mathematics, rather than English, being the main reason for the drop.

	2015	2015	2016	2016	2017	2017
	National	Durham	National	Durham	National	Durham
% Basics (A*-C Eng & Maths)	61%	58%	63%	62.3%	63.9%	58.2%

- 17 Another proxy measure of relative performance can be had from comparing Durham's average Attainment 8 scores per pupil in maintained schools against

the similar cohort nationally, a calculation that can be done by gender and for all pupils, and for disadvantaged pupils.

- 18 The average Attainment 8 score for pupils in Durham's maintained schools is 44.6, compared to the national result of 46.3. This equates to each pupil in Durham achieving roughly three-quarters to one-and-a-half grades lower than average in one of their qualifications (and average in all other qualifications they have taken).
- 19 Girls in County Durham are slightly further behind their national peers on the average attainment 8 outcome, with a score of 47.2 compared to the national result of 49.1. Boys in County Durham schools average 42.2 compared to 43.8 for all boys nationally.
- 20 Disadvantaged pupils who attend County Durham schools achieve close to the national average for similar pupils nationally, scoring 36.8 on average. The national result for this group of pupils is 37.1.
- 21 However, the Department for Education prefers disadvantaged pupils to be compared with non-disadvantaged children nationally and this shows a gap of 13.1 (non-disadvantaged children nationally average 49.9). Durham's non-disadvantaged pupils achieved average 48.5.
- 22 Care must be taken when looking at each strand of the Attainment 8 measure in the published results, since some elements measure three qualifications and some represent twice the best grade achieved in a subject. However, with this in mind, the average points per strand in Durham and nationally were:

<b>Strand</b>	<b>LA</b>	<b>National</b>
English (twice best grade)	9.4	9.9
Maths (twice grade)	8.3	9.0
EBacc (three slots)	12.6	11.6
Open (three slots)	15.3	14.9

- 23 What paragraphs 14 to 20, above, highlight, is that end of Key Stage 4 attainment outcomes, on nearly every measure, are below where they should be when compared with attainment of KS4 cohorts in previous years. Additionally, paragraph 20 shows that outcomes in English and particularly the significant gap between maths outcomes in Durham against national are making a critical difference. English and maths are both double-weighted in the points scoring system (paragraph 11).
- 24 Durham performed slightly better than national in both the EBacc subjects and the open subject 'basket'.
- 25 Turning to progress of pupils, the Progress 8 result for the local authority was -0.23, against the national result of -0.03 (all state-funded schools). Following the same pattern as the national results, boys in Durham have been judged to make less progress than girls. Our boys scored -0.43, against a national

average of -0.24; our girls averaged -0.01, compared to a national result of 0.18.

- 26 Amongst disadvantaged pupils, Progress 8 was -0.48 in Durham and -0.40 nationally. The non-disadvantaged children nationally had a positive Progress 8, of 0.11, but Durham's non-disadvantaged pupils averaged -0.11, which is statistically significantly below for the size of the cohort.
- 27 While the Progress 8 score for pupils in the open subject 'basket' is positive, meaning pupils made greater progress than predicted for them as indicated from their Key Stage 2 outcomes, in the other strands scores were negative (ie: pupils made less progress than would have been predicted for them) and in each case this was significantly worse than national averages.

<b>Strand</b>	<b>LA</b>	<b>National</b>
English	<b>-0.32</b>	-0.04
Maths	<b>-0.38</b>	-0.02
EBacc	<b>-0.36</b>	-0.03
Open	<b>0.06</b>	-0.04

- 28 While national subject results split by gender are not yet available, pupil-level data shows that girls' maths progress in Durham is worse than their English progress. By gender, our progress 8 results for English and Maths are:

<b>Strand of P8</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Boys</b>
English	0.07	-0.67
Maths	-0.40	-0.37

- 29 Boys have historically fared much worse than girls in English, both locally and nationally, and this pattern has persisted in 2017 in Durham, but it remains a cause for concern. Subject leaders are working with the local authority to understand teaching and learning approaches that maintain the interest of boys and foster their achievement.
- 30 Entry rates to the EBacc fell locally and nationally. Only 34.9% of Durham pupils entered qualifications in all the relevant subjects, down from 41.7% in 2016 and compared to 38.4% nationally, with the largest fall in Languages. This aligns with the national picture.

### **Explaining the Key Stage 4 outcomes in Durham**

- 31 The paragraphs above provide factual details on the outcomes of Durham's secondary schools in 2017, but the underperformance against national measures, and the fact that Durham was 3<sup>rd</sup> out of the region's 12 local authorities in 2016, but has dropped in terms of both average attainment 8 and average Progress 8 in 2017, requires explanation.

<b>Region</b>	<b>Attainment 8 Average 2017</b>	<b>Progress 8 Average 2017</b>
<b>County Durham</b>	<b>44.6</b>	<b>-0.23</b>
Darlington	45.3	-0.23
Gateshead	46.8	-0.12
Hartlepool	44.0	-0.27
Middlesbrough	43.2	-0.08
Newcastle upon Tyne	43.3	-0.23
North Tyneside	47.0	-0.08
Northumberland	44.7	-0.16
Redcar and Cleveland	44.0	-0.32
South Tyneside	43.0	-0.32
Stockton-on-Tees	45.6	-0.10
Sunderland	43.8	-0.31

- 32 Durham's secondary schools have owed some of their GCSE success in recent years to their ability to provide a tailored curriculum that met the needs of most pupils. Durham had a long track record of ensuring pupils achieved the key national benchmark (x5 A\*-C GCSEs, including English and Maths), with a wide offer of vocational subjects. In the past pupils chose less hard-to-achieve academic subjects (such as modern foreign languages, maths and sciences).
- 33 It is worth noting that these subjects are those to which recruitment nationally has been in a state of well-publicised crisis. In the north east and in County Durham, the recruitment of maths teachers is virtually stagnant, with many GCSE classes being taught by supply teachers in 2016/17 as vacancies went unfilled.
- 34 In summary, due to the circumstances described, schools in Durham were unready to respond to a rapidly changed examination and assessment system. The implications of not moving fast enough to adopt a new approach has only been grasped by the majority of school leaders after this first set of outcomes has exposed the weaknesses of these historically adopted approaches.

### **Next Steps**

- 35 Following the analysis of secondary outcomes in 2017, the following actions have been taken:
- (a) Strategic subject review in English, Maths, Science, MFL, Geography and History by LA Improvement advisers (desktop study informing operational planning and leading to wholesale revision of network content. Refocus of subject leader network meetings to address subject outcome deficiencies and including awarding body training where appropriate (not limited to EBacc subjects).

- (b) LA Subject specific improvement plans for each Ebacc subject incorporating actions to be taken by LA and actions to be taken by schools.
- (c) Targeted support of schools where outcomes are weak in Ebacc subjects through Education Development Partner engagement with school leaders and use of SLA contract hours (new SLA information to be circulated after February half term to facilitate this).
- (d) Provide a proactive response to potential non-attendance at Subject leader networks for key schools.
- (e) Provide bespoke support to schools which are at levels 3 or 4 on the LA monitoring and intervention process (mainly Ofsted RI or inadequate or where an acting or new HT is in place).
- (f) Key priorities, including achievement of boys, higher attaining pupils and subject specific literacy, to be covered by a new network for 2018-19; further standards-related priorities addressed through existing senior leader networks.
- (g) Development of specific packages to deliver to schools 3 key support areas including focus on subject evaluation and improvement planning.
- (h) Developed approach to working with attendance team and Inclusion personnel to improve attendance.
- (i) Work with partners to improve recruitment and retention of the best qualified teachers, particularly in shortage subject areas as defined in this report.

## **Conclusion**

36 This report acknowledges the very positive outcomes of Durham schools and settings in most areas, but highlights the underperformance at KS4 in 2017, and proposes the ways in which the local authority is responding to the challenges.

## **Recommendations**

37 Cabinet is requested to note the information.

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## Appendix 1: Implications

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**Finance** – none

**Staffing** - none

**Risk** - Potential reputational issues if results fall or the local authority is deemed not to know its schools well

**Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty** – some outcomes are evaluated by gender and the gender gap is a national consideration. The local authority closely monitors gender and other equality factors, including SEND, and responds proportionately in terms of support and intervention. Some support is specifically tailored to address gender gaps that emerge from educational outcomes.

**Accommodation** – n/a

**Crime and Disorder** – n/a

**Human Rights** – n/a

**Consultation** – n/a

**Procurement** – n/a

**Disability Issues** – n/a

**Legal Implications** – The actions taken at Paragraph 35 of this report are intended to comply with the Council's duty to exercise its education functions with a view to promoting high standards and the fulfilment of each pupil's learning potential in accordance with S 13 A of the Education Act 1996.