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To: Children Families and Education Policy Overview Committee - 13 November 2008

Subject: OCTOBER REPORT TO CABINET MEMBERS 2008 ANNUAL UPDATE ON THE PERFORMANCE OF KENT SCHOOLS IN 2008

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report has been prepared to provide an annual update on the performance of Kent Schools in 2008.

Introduction/Background

1. (1) Every year the autumn report for Cabinet Members analyses all key stage assessments and external examination results for the children and young people in Kent maintained schools. The Members Monitoring Group has requested that this information be presented to the Children, Families and Education Policy Overview Committee.

(2) In 2008 Kent schools recorded excellent academic results in each key stage of education.

Foundation stage

2. (1) From September this year the new Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) has been introduced and this brings together the learning, development and welfare requirements for children from birth to the end of the reception year. In anticipation of this new statutory targets were set in 2007 for summer 2008:

The first is a **general improvement target** that reflects the focus on all round achievement, as well as key skills for learning and communication. Local Authorities must focus on increasing the proportion of our youngest children achieving:-

- at least six points¹ in all aspects of communication, language and literacy (CLL)
- **and** at least six points in all aspects of personal, social and emotional (PSE) development

¹ Each aspect of learning has a scale from 0 to 9 and guidelines indicate that children achieving:

- 0 to 3 points are working **below** expectations
- 4 to 7 points are working **within** expectations
- 8 or 9 points are working **above** expectations

Children who achieve 6 or more points at the end of reception year are considered to be working “**securely**” within the expected level and deemed to have reached a good level of development in readiness for Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum.

- **and** also achieving a point score overall of at least 78 points in their Foundation Stage Profile.

(2) The second is **an equalities target** that focuses on reducing the achievement gap, between *the average score of the lowest achieving 20% of pupils* and the median (middle) score of each whole cohort of children. To meet this target requires the pace of improvement for children in areas of deprivation, to be significantly faster than that of all other children.

(3) It is pleasing to report that the proportion of pupils in Kent achieving the expected 6 points in each area of learning, has improved all thirteen dimensions.

(4) The improvement target that was agreed in 2007, was exceeded this summer by 3.9% and there were improvements in all other measures. This is the second year of significant improvements which consolidated the excellent results of 2007.

(5) The Early Years team has used a number of strategies and key programmes to support children to meet or exceed national expectations. Full details of these programmes and their impact on outcomes for children can be found in Appendix A.

Primary Performance

3. (1) The primary phase is divided into two key stages and children are assessed at the end of Key Stage 1, aged 7 years and again at the end of Key Stage 2, aged 11 years.

Key Stage 1

(2) Performance at key stage 1 has reached the national average in all 3 aspects of reading, writing and mathematics at the expected Level 2, for the very first time and now actually exceeds national for the higher level in all three subjects.

Key Stage 2

(3) Kent eleven year olds have achieved their best ever results in English and mathematics, improving in both subjects at level 4, (the level that pupils of this age are expected to achieve prior to moving to secondary school). Kent schools have also achieved excellent results in reading at levels 4 and 5.

(4) The most significant gains have been made where support has been targeted through programmes such as *Raising Achievement in Your School* and the *Intensifying Support Programme*). A key focus has been the implementation of the revised *Frameworks for Literacy and Numeracy*, aimed at raising standards. School Improvement Partners (SIPs) for each primary school provide additional support and challenge, tracking the performance of individuals and groups of children.

New national KS2 targets

(5) The government is introducing new performance targets for 2009, which will measure the proportion of children who make 2 levels of progress between the end of key stage 1 and the end of key stage 2, in English and separately in mathematics

(6) Each autumn, SIPs analyse pupil achievement and review with headteachers the progress made by individual children or groups of children. This will always include particular consideration of the intervention strategies to be used to meet the needs of vulnerable groups and the performance of boys and Children in Care. The information analysed by each school informs their own school self-evaluation and enables school leaders to make adjustments to priorities in improvement plans.

(7) A number of key programmes and strategies are in place in the primary phase of education to support children to meet or exceed national expectations. Full details of these programmes and their impact on outcomes for children can be found in Appendix B.

Secondary performance

4. (1) The secondary phase is divided into three key stages, 3, 4 and 5 (or post-16). Pupils have been assessed aged 14 and again at aged 16 and at the time of writing all results are provisional.

Key Stage 3

(2) Outcomes in key stage 3 this year have been affected by issues related to Educational Testing Service Europe, the company contracted to undertake marking of the tests. This report is based on results for 97 schools although, at the time of writing, not all schools have had a full set of results returned and national results will not be available for some time.

(3) The Average Point Score per pupil for key stage 3 takes into account the performance of pupils across English, mathematics and science and it remains above the national average.

(4) As far as we can state at present it would appear that the proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected Level 5 in English matches national results and at level 6 Kent schools improved on 2007.

(5) The proportion of pupils achieving the expected level 5 in mathematics increased this year. The proportion of pupils reaching level 5 in science matches national results.

Key Stage 4

(6) In 2008 pupils once again achieved their best ever results with 66.8% achieving 5+ A*-C at GCSE or equivalent, 2.2% above national.

(7) Kent pupils also made good progress at 5+ A*-C including English/mathematics with 49.5% of students achieving this measure in 2008. This was an increase of 1% from the 2007 results, which were above the national average.

(8) The percentage of pupils gaining 5+ A*-G or equivalent has remained approximately the same and is now 1.4% above national at 92.7%.

(9) All secondary schools in Kent achieved 30% 5+ A*-C or above, for the first time in 2008, exceeding the national floor target set by the government for this year

(10) A number of High and Wide Ability schools made progress at the same rate as the top 25% nationally. Common features in these schools are:

- high expectations of pupil achievement, which often includes the setting of challenging individual targets for all pupils;
- robust and regular tracking of pupil progress and current attainment against their targets
- effective intervention strategies for pupils who are not meeting their targets.

(11) A number of key programmes and strategies are in place in the secondary phase of education to support children to meet or exceed national expectations. Full details of these programmes and their impact on outcomes for children can be found in Appendix C.

Targets for 2009

(12) New targets have recently been announced for 2009 which are quite different from those set in the past. Schools will only have to set targets for the proportion achieving 5+ A*-C grades at GCSE and equivalent including GCSE (E/M)

(13) There will only be one attainment measure (schools no longer have to set targets for 5+ A*-C or APS) and two progress measures, focused particularly on progress in English and mathematics

Post 16

(14) The **proportion** of Kent students attaining at least 2+ A Levels (A-E) remained virtually static although the **number** of pupils increased by 441.

(15) The APS per student rose from 737.1 to 750.5 in 2008 and is now 17 points above national. The APS per examination entry rose.

(17) More students are achieving the recognised standard for a Level 3 qualification, which in turn allows greater choice beyond the sixth form, including the opportunity to go onto higher education courses at university or college.

Recommendations

Members of the Children Families and Education Policy Overview Committee are asked to note this report.

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Background Documents:

None

Other useful information:

None

KEY SUPPORT & INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES

Early Years Phase

The Leuven Project

Kent has a well established partnership with Leuven University in Belgium and has piloted materials that are designed to fully engage very young children and to secure their sense of well-being. Early years teachers and practitioners learn to observe their pupils very carefully and to organise classrooms for independent learning.

The 'Leuven approach' has been used to support the work of the Local Area Agreement, for settings in the Surestart areas of Swale, Gravesham and Dover. The methodology provides a framework to assess children's levels of engagement but also promotes proactive and reflective practice.

The Communication, Language and Literacy Development (CLLD) Project

This project focuses on improving teachers' skills and thus their ability to accelerate children's progress in using and applying their knowledge of phonics. It has targeted 15 schools and 35 settings in Dover and Maidstone. This Primary Strategy Programme has demonstrated very good evidence of pupil progress through the stages of phonic acquisition. The next phase of this project will be to continue this intensive work and to target schools and early year's settings in the Gravesham Local Children's services Partnership.

Setting Improvement Partner (SIP) Programme

In September 2007, Phase 1 of the programme began with SIPs allocated to the 20 operational Children Centres and to 103 of the most vulnerable early year's settings. The criteria used to assess the level of support required has been agreed and published within the *Kent Improvement Strategy for Schools and Early Years Settings* (revised September 2008). The SIP programme moves into Phase 2 from September 2008 when 243 settings will have a SIP deployed to provide regular support and challenge.

Improving staff qualifications in the Private, Voluntary and Independent sector

The Advisory Service will continue to promote pathways to increase levels of practitioners' qualifications by working with Higher Education and Further Education Colleges to disseminate information. The Government Transformation Fund, (operational from April 2006 to March 2008) was successfully managed by Kent and provided bursaries and supply cover for staff in PVI settings to increase their levels of qualifications. 1433 practitioners in Kent benefited from this opportunity.

In partnership with the Specialist Teaching Service, 20 early years Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) have undertaken an Early Years Special Educational Needs course that provides participants with credits towards a foundation degree. This modular approach, for many practitioners who have not recently engaged in adult study, allows them to gain confidence in their own skills and capabilities in a supportive peer group.

Kent Quality Mark

The new Kent Quality Mark (a quality assurance scheme) has been in a pilot developmental phase this year. It is based on the Leuven principles, but also has strong links with the new EYFS, the Partnership with Parents in Early Learning and audit tools such as the Early Childhood and Infant and Toddler Environmental Rating Scales. The model supports self-evaluative and reflective practice and will support settings in their plan, do and review improvement cycle. The planned rollout of the Kent Quality Mark will be phased aiming to recruit 100 settings in the first wave.

Parents as Partners in Early Learning

This 9 month national pilot project was completed in July and the aims were to:

- Improve the levels of well-being and involvement in children in all aspects of their daily lives, promoting and supporting children's overall growth and holistic development
- Empower parents, including absent parents, and other family adults to feel confident in sharing in children's learning
- Increase practitioners understanding of the importance of involving parents fully in their child's learning and experiences.

The project involved 12 Children Centres in four areas of highest deprivation in Kent (Gravesend, Swale, Thanet and Dover) and parents and carers were offered ten two hourly weekly workshops with crèche provision.

Other aspects included the acquisition and support of language development, the value of spontaneous storytelling and book reading in the process of literacy development, singing nursery rhymes and the value of creative play.

Kent Creative Partnerships taught parents/carers how to make books and Kent Librarians identified and purchased children's books to help young children to develop emotional expression.

Intensive Support Programme

The *Intensive Support Programme* continues in 2008/09 to provide schools with both funding and additional adviser support, to work with the whole school and particularly school leadership teams. The programme aims to raise attainment in many of our most challenging schools that have a history of low attainment in English and mathematics. Specific funding is allocated to support 20 of the larger schools in Kent that need to reach floor targets at Key Stage 2.

The continuing success of the programme is demonstrated by the impressive gains made by schools, with performance at Level 4 improving in English by 8.5% and in mathematics by 12.2%.

Ensuring Success Programme

Ensuring Success is a Kent designed programme, financed through Standards Fund, which supports schools that have still to achieve 65% in either English or mathematics. It is also an effective exit strategy for schools that have successfully implemented the *Intensive Support Programme*.

The aims of the programme are to increase the number of children working at or above age-appropriate levels; raise awareness of age-related expectations across the primary phase; provide quality training tailored to the needs of the school; further improve leadership and management in identified areas.

Schools in the programme made gains at Level 4 with improvements of 4.9% in English and 3.7% in mathematics.

The Quality, Excellence-Seeking Teachers (QUEST) Project

Since 2004, ASK has worked in partnership with 48 of the largest primary schools, identified as part of the Local Area Agreement as still to achieve floor targets of 65% in English and mathematics at Level 4.

The project has now come to a very successful conclusion and the average performance of project schools has significantly improved and English and mathematics targets have been exceeded.

Within School Variation Project

Appendix C

For the past two years 22 schools have worked together with the Advisory Service and the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, to improve their standards at GCSE and to reduce variation between school departments. These schools have improved their performance considerably by 6.9%

Project schools also made a 7.3% improvement compared to 3.5% improvement made by Kent schools overall between 2006 and 2008 for 5+ A*-C (E/M).