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To: Children Families and Education Policy Overview Committee –
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Summary: This paper provides a report on the outcome of assessments and examinations in Kent schools in 2007

Introduction

1. During the summer term of each academic year, pupils in reception classes are assessed using the Foundation Stage Profile and at the end of each key stage using Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs) or by taking public examinations to determine progress and standards of achievement. This paper provides the first level analysis of outcomes of tests and examinations, for Kent schools in 2007.

Kent Performance

The Foundation Stage

2. (1) Assessment of children during the reception year, recorded improvements in all thirteen areas of learning, compared to only four nationally. The improvements this year have brought Kent to a position that equals or exceeds the national benchmarks in nine of the thirteen measures

In a 'dry run' on the new target setting requirements agreed with the Department for Children, Schools and Families, Kent met and exceeded three of four new targets, narrowly missing the fourth by a margin of 0.4%.

Key Stage 1

(2) In Key Stage 1, performance by Kent schools improved in five of the nine measures, compared with national improvements in only two. Reading and mathematics at the higher level 3 were both above national performance and writing at level 3 was equal to national performance. More pupils need to achieve at level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics in 2008 to provide a firm foundation for success in key stage 2.

The three year trend for boys reading showed a 3% gain in Kent against a 1% national decline.

Key Stage 2

(3) Key Stage 2 in English, mathematics and science, there was improvement in eight out of ten measures.

(4) Boys reading and writing improved at level 4 by 2.3% in both areas. The gain in writing was greater than the national improvement for boys and reflects the emphasis given by schools and Advisory Service Kent to boys achievement in these two aspects of English.

(5) Year on year improvement trends have largely mirrored national upward trends, but nonetheless the county averages generally remain below national, with the exception of writing at level 5, where an increased rate of improvement has put Kent performance above national for both boys and girls

(6) Major support programmes in underperforming schools demonstrated significant impact. For example the 20 participating primary schools in the Intensive Support Programme showed an average improvement at level 4, of 11% in English and 8% in mathematics.

Key Stage 3

(7) The Key Stage 3 average point scores for achievement at level 5 and above for English, mathematics and science, combined and as individual subjects, remain above the national average. Comparison with statistical neighbours places Kent fifth for all three subjects and third for English, sixth for mathematics and fifth for science.

(8) In science, performance remained the same as in 2006, while English improved and mathematics fell slightly by 1%. The predicted impact of early entry is having an effect as forecast, as Kent schools explore a range of approaches to the amount of time spent studying in key stages 3 and 4 and the curriculum content.

At the higher level 6 and above Kent performance remained above the national average in English and science and remained at 2006 levels in mathematics.

Key Stage 4

(9) At key stage 4 Kent secondary schools have recorded improvements in GCSE results every year for the past decade but the rate of improvement continues to increase. The provisional outcome is around 65% of pupils achieving 5A*-C remaining well ahead of national performance. Kent ranks first in the statistical neighbour group. (The DCSF will release final national data sets in January 2008)

(10) From 2009 the 5A*-C GCSE target will be replaced by 5A*-C GCSE including English and mathematics. In 2007, Kent schools achieved around 49% against this measure, a further improvement on the previous year. Kent exceeded the national performance by 2.2%, increasing the gap. The result placed Kent in second place against statistical neighbours, 0.4% away from first place.

(11) The 27 secondary schools serving the most deprived communities in Kent improved performance for the sixth year in succession. Over the last five years the group has improved performance against the 5A*-C measure by 11.9%. This is a significantly

greater rate of improvement than for schools serving less deprived communities. The attainment gap between the performance of schools serving the most deprived and the least deprived communities has closed by 6.3% over the last five years.

(12) The provisional contextual value added (CVA) outcome of 1007.6, is higher than the national average and shows an improvement of 2.6 points from 2006. CVA is a measure of pupil progress from Key Stage 2-4 and takes into account a range of socio-economic factors.

Post 16

(13) The performance of Kent pupils at Advanced level with two subjects grades A*- E or equivalent improved for the third successive year. The achievement of 92.2%, is the highest performance ever, an improvement of 6.9% on 2006.

(14) The average point score (APS) per entry for Kent schools rose by 2.1% to and the APS per student improved by 10.4%. Both scores are the highest ever recorded by the Kent school's sector. Provisional national comparisons include students in further education colleges and place Kent in fifth place against statistical neighbours for APS per entry and sixth place for APS per student.

Recommendations

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

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Report to Cabinet Members October 2007