

By: David Firth, Policy Adviser - Strategy, Policy and Assurance

To: Social Mobility in Grammar Schools Select Committee – 16 December 2015

Subject: Social Mobility in Grammar Schools Select Committee Topic Review

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: To discuss and agree proposed Terms of Reference, Scope and general approach for the Review

1 Introduction

Kent County Council is committed to ensuring that all Kent children have equitable access to the best educational setting to meet their needs, including fair and equal access to grammar schools.

To this end, this cross party Select Committee will explore social mobility in Grammar Schools. Children from all backgrounds must have the same opportunities as all other children and families to flourish and succeed within the education system.

The Select Committee will examine whether disadvantaged children and their parents face barriers in accessing Grammar school education, what KCC and partners are already doing to tackle these barriers, and how the County Council with our partners can go further in encouraging more parents from disadvantaged backgrounds to enter their children into the Kent Test. We will also examine the role we play to ensure young people that have the potential for a grammar school education, irrespective of class or background, get the necessary support to access a school that matches their academic ability.

2 Committee Membership – Draft (To Be Confirmed)

The Select Committee consists of nine elected Members of Kent County Council:

Mr Andrew Bowles (Conservative)

Mr Lee Burgess (UKIP)

Mr Eric Hotson (Conservative)

Mr Roger Latchford (UKIP)

Mr Alan Marsh (Conservative)

Mrs Paulina Stockell (Conservative)

Mr Roger Truelove (Labour)

Mrs Jenny Whittle (Chair Designate - Conservative)

Mr Martin Vye (Lib Dem)

The committee will consider whether to include any additional co-opted members.

3 Draft Terms of Reference

1. To determine whether disadvantaged children and their parents face barriers in accessing grammar school education.
2. To identify and better understand the drivers that underpin any such barriers.
3. To consider and examine the effects of what KCC and partners are already doing to ensure fair access to Grammar schools for all.
4. To consider what KCC and partners can do in order to further improve access to Grammar schools for disadvantaged children.
5. For the Select Committee to make recommendations after having gathered evidence throughout the review.

4 Draft Key Lines of Enquiry

The tight timeframe of the review requires a clear and focused approach. Possible key lines of enquiry to be covered by the review are detailed below:

1. To determine whether disadvantaged children and their parents face barriers in accessing Grammar school education
 - a. Explore whether there is a gap between the percentage of children on Free School Meals (FSM) and the percentage of children not on FSM who achieve Level 5s at KS2 and are entered for and pass the Kent Test.
 - b. Explore whether there is a gap between children on FSM and the percentage of children not on FSM who achieve Level 2 and above at KS1. Explore whether this attainment correlates to those then entered for the Kent Test at 11
 - c. Explore what percentage of children in care achieve Level 5s at KS2 are entered for the Kent Test
 - d. Examine how children are identified to be entered for the Kent Test, including children in care
 - e. What are the barriers to children on FSM in entering the Kent Test? Are these social as well as educational? What is the role of school marketing if any on these barriers?
 - f. To examine attainment levels / educational outcomes of FSM children in grammar schools up to 18 yrs old, for this examination to include all entry points (i.e. those who join Grammar school after the age of 11)
 - g. To explore research around the accessibility of the test itself for children who are disadvantaged.
2. To identify and better understand the drivers of any barriers.
 - a. Review what guidance, if any, is given to schools on providing support to disadvantaged children who may benefit from access to grammar schools.
 - b. To explore opportunities to engage with parents of disadvantaged children who have recently sat the 11+ or who are considering taking the Kent test.

3. To consider and examine the effects of what KCC and partners are already doing to ensure fair access to Grammar schools for all.
 - a. Explore case studies of primary schools with high FSM intake going onto grammar schools and consider factors in their success.
 - b. Review the impact of Gifted and Talented classes on FSM intake delivered by grammar schools in primary schools.
 - c. Explore whether the Pupil Premium for children on FSM and the Pupil Premium for children who are in care / have been looked after has led to an increase in their intake in grammar schools in Kent (look at Yr 7 intake compared to current Yr 12).
 - d. Consider the value and impact of collaboration / partnerships between primary schools and grammar schools.
4. To consider what KCC and partners can do further to improve access to Grammar schools by disadvantaged children.
 - a. To gather evidence from KCC Members and officers, schools, and representatives of relevant external organisations to identify what steps need to be taken to overcome these barriers?
 - b. Explore the role of parents and Headteachers in identifying appropriate options for children in Yr 4/5 and the role of primary schools in shaping children's access to grammar schools.
 - c. To investigate best practice examples from other United Kingdom selective areas of what actions they have taken to improve access to Grammar schools for disadvantaged children and how these might be utilised in Kent.
5. For the Select Committee to make recommendations after having gathered evidence throughout the review

5 General Approach

The review is proposed to include a period of desk-based research followed by evidence gathering sessions.

Potential witnesses may include:

- The Corporate Director for Education and Young People's Services
- The Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform
- The Director of Education Planning and Access, KCC
- Head of Information and Intelligence, KCC
- Director of Education, Quality and Standards, KCC
- Grammar School Head teachers / Executive Head teachers
- Primary School Head teachers
- Focus Group of Parents of Disadvantaged Children
- Expert witnesses (to be defined)

6 Proposed Timetable (summary)

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| 16 December 2015 | First meeting of Select Committee, to appoint the Chairman and to discuss and agree the Terms of Reference of the review |
| December 2015 and January 2016 | Desk-based review of existing research and national reports |
| January and February 2016 | Hearings and evidence gathering |
| End of February | Committee meets to identify key issues and to make recommendations |
| March 2016 – Early April 2016 | Report writing, production of first draft |
| Early April 2016 | Committee discusses the first draft of the report and suggests amendments. Amendments carried out accordingly |
| Mid April 2016 | Select Committee share the report with Cabinet Member(s) and Corporate Director(s) |
| Mid April 2016 | Formal Meeting of the Committee to agree final report |
| Mid April 2016 | Report shared with relevant boards |
| 15th April 2016 | Despatch for Cabinet |
| 25th April 2016 | Report presented to Cabinet |
| 11th May 2016 | Despatch for County Council |
| 19th May 2016 | Report presented to County Council |

7 Evidence Gathering – Hearings

Hearings will normally be open to the public unless there is a specific requirement to hold a closed session.

It is proposed that Members remain for 30 minutes after each set of interviews (normally 3 in each set) to ensure that all views, key points and emerging recommendations are captured.

The Committee will take evidence from a range of witnesses. Further witnesses may be suggested as the review progresses (written evidence may be requested from those who are unable to attend or cannot be included in the timetable).

8. Exclusions

It is proposed that there is agreement to avoid any wider debate on Grammar schools or selective education in general.

Recommendations:

1. To agree the Terms of Reference and general approach to the review of Social Mobility in Grammar Schools

Contacts:

- John Reilly, Strategic Business Advisor, john.reilly@kent.gov.uk, 03000416949
- David Firth, Policy Adviser, david.firth@kent.gov.uk, 03000 416089;
- Serine Annan-Veitch, Policy Adviser, serine.annan-veitch@kent.gov.uk, 03000 415782;