

Select Committee - Grammar School and Social Mobility

Hearing 1: Monday 1st February 2016

Witness Guide for Members

Below are suggested themes and questions. They have been provided in advance to the witnesses to allow them to prepare for the types of issues that Members may be interested to explore. All Members are welcome to ask these questions or pose additional ones to the witnesses via the Committee Chairman.

Themes and Questions

**Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform, and
Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director – Education and Young People’s Services
(Kent County Council)**

- Please introduce yourselves and provide an outline of the role and responsibilities of your posts.
- Less than 3% of all pupils going to Grammar schools are entitled to FSM, against 13% in non-selective schools in Kent. This is compared to Northern Ireland, for example, where 7% of pupils on FSM attend Grammar schools. Why is this?
- Why are academically high achieving FSM children less likely to apply for and secure a place at a Grammar school than their non-FSM peers, despite the fact they may have a high KS2 test result?
- How is Pupil Premium funding being used to narrow the gap and has it been successful to date?
- What steps are being taken to identify children on FSM as early as KS1 who should be entered for the Kent Test and how is the Pupil Premium used to support their journey to grammar education?
- Is the increased numbers of free schools and academies in Kent having any bearing on parents and children choosing selective or non-selective education?
- What changes has Kent made to improve fair access for low income families to grammar schools? For example, testing, test preparation, outreach, admissions or collaborations. And, what impact have these had?
- How can Grammar schools in Kent open themselves up to more disadvantaged students and increase the proportion of FSM and CIC pupils on their rolls? For example, through giving priority to academically high achieving pupils applying for admission, who are in receipt of the Pupil Premium?
- How can KCC influence the proportion of FSM and CIC children accessing Grammar schools given that individual schools, and particularly Academy Grammar schools, have their own admissions policies?
- The Sutton Trust has reported that parents from disadvantaged backgrounds often associate their schools with tradition, middle class values and elitism, creating a social rather than an educational barrier to make them reluctant to send

their children to the local grammar. Do you think this is true and if so, how can we mitigate this perception?

- How can KCC, in partnership with schools, support children, parents and schools to ensure fairer access to a Grammar school education for FSM children and Children in Care?
- Who decides if a child in care should take the Kent Test?
- Are there any other issues that you would like raise with the Committee?