

Select Committee - Grammar School and Social Mobility

Hearing 2: Thursday 4th 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

Tony Doran – Headteacher of Virtual School Kent (VSK)

- Please introduce yourself and provide an outline of the role and responsibilities of your post.
- Please give some context around the Children in Care cohort, including what information is available on their academic progress.
- How many Children in Care have taken and passed the Kent Test, and has this improved over the last 3-5 years?
- How are Children in Care identified for the Kent Test, and supported through the selection process, including advocating on their behalf during appeals? How is KCC, as the Corporate Parent, engaged in this process?
- In your view, what are the main issues faced by Children in Care in Kent achieving fair access to Grammar schools?
- Are there improvements within primary schools in terms of narrowing the Children in Care attainment gap and has this led to increased numbers of Children in Care achieving a place in Grammar school?
- To what extent has pupil premium funding led to a narrowing of the gap for Children in Care attainment in Kent schools?
- Do Children in Care view Grammar school as a viable option, and if not, why not? Sutton Trust research 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?
- What can Kent County Council do to promote social mobility in access to Grammar schools?
- Are there any other issues that you would like to raise with the Committee?