

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

Scott Bagshaw, Head of Fair Access, (Kent County Council) and

Gay Reay, PESE Manager, (Kent County Council)

- Please introduce yourselves and provide an outline of the role and responsibilities of your posts.
- Please provide a brief overview of the Kent Test selection process, its purpose, and how it operates.
- What are the reasons for the difference in the percentage of FSM children who take the Kent Test in comparison to non FSM children?
- Are there barriers within the Kent Test selection process which are disadvantaging academically high achieving FSM children?
- 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?
- Is the solution to increasing the number of FSM and CIC attending Grammar schools and providing a more level playing field, to ensure free test preparation for all high achieving primary school pupils?
- How does Kent County Council work with schools to promote engagement with children and parents around applications for a Grammar school place where suitable?
- To what extent are parents of academically high achieving FSM children less likely to appeal compared with their non FSM peers?
- To what extent do Grammar schools' individual selection processes including additional tests (i.e. Folkestone/Dover tests) and oversubscription criteria make it easier or harder for FSM children to access a Grammar school place in differing parts of the county? What are the outcomes for children on FSM in schools that have adopted this approach?
- 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?
- Are there any other issues that you would like to raise with the Committee?