

Select Committee - Grammar Schools and Social Mobility

Hearing 3: Friday 5th 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

Gillian Cawley, Director, Education Quality and Standards, (Kent County Council)

- Please introduce yourself and provide an outline of the role and responsibilities of your post.
- How do attainment levels differ between FSM children and non FSM children in primary school?
- Is there variation across Kent's districts in the percentage of FSM children who pass the Kent test and take up a place at a Grammar school? If so, why?
- What are the barriers to academically high achieving children from disadvantaged backgrounds applying for and taking up Grammar school places?
- What can primary and Grammar schools do to encourage high achieving pupils from low income families, to apply for grammar schools in greater numbers?
- Do Primary schools in Multi-academy Trusts promote the Secondary school within the MAT ahead of taking the Kent Test?
- 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?
- Is there support for low income parents to encourage them to enable their academically high achieving children to apply for Grammar schools? Could we, for instance, help low income families with some form of additional support or a financial bursary?
- 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?
- Do attainment levels and destinations at Year 11 and beyond differ between FSM children and non FSM children once in Grammar school?
- Are there any other issues that you would like to raise with the Committee?