

MASTER DRAFT

Delivering Bold Steps for Kent

Education, Learning and Skills
Vision and Priorities for Improvement

2013 - 2016



Education, Learning and Skills Vision and Priorities for Improvement

Vision:

Our vision is for Kent to be the most forward looking area in England for education and learning so that we are the best place for children and young people to grow up, learn, develop and achieve.

Kent should be a place where families thrive and all children learn and develop well from the earliest years so that they are ready to succeed at school, have excellent foundations for learning and are equipped well for achievement in life, no matter what their background.

In Kent we should have the same expectations for every child and young person to make good progress in their learning, to achieve well and to have the best opportunities for an independent economic and social life as they become young adults.

Every child and young person should go to a good or outstanding school, have access to the best teaching, and benefit from schools and other providers working in partnership with each other to share the best practice as they continue to improve.

Our strategic priorities in Kent Bold Steps are to ensure all pupils meet their full potential, to shape education and skills provision around the needs of the Kent economy and improve services for the most vulnerable young people in Kent.

Our Ambition

Central to our ambition is the desire to create the conditions in which pupils experience the best learning and teaching, and where pupils' moral and intellectual development and confidence can flourish. We want every child in Kent to achieve well above expectations and not to be held back by their social background. We want every young person to benefit from a broad range of pathways to further learning and employment, for their own achievement and for the success of the Kent economy.

We will do this by focusing relentlessly on improving standards and the quality of education and learning so that excellence is promoted across the system. We will ensure children continue to get a good start in life, by working alongside all the agencies who work with very young children and their families, particularly health practitioners and those providing services through our Children's Centres, so that we promote the highest quality early learning and childcare in the Foundation Stage. We will work tirelessly to ensure every child can go to a good school where they make good progress and can have fair access to school places. And we will ensure every young person to age 18 is engaged in purposeful education and training, and they are well prepared for skilled employment and higher learning.

We will achieve this by learning from and spreading the influence of the best, whether locally, nationally or internationally and through working in partnership across all types of school and

phases of education and learning and with partners across the business sectors, local government, health, social care, the voluntary and community sectors, and especially with parents, carers, local communities and the children and young people themselves.

We will support the best schools and school leaders to lead the system and drive improvement through collaboration across all schools, settings and education and training providers, supporting and challenging each other in how we achieve our goals, so that we are able to transform outcomes for all of our children and young people more rapidly. We will promote innovation and creativity in teaching and learning and the curriculum, so that Kent achieves a world class education system, greater social mobility and reverses the national trends of under performance for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups which hold back progress in our economy and our society.

We see learning as a lifelong process in which learners should always be able to progress successfully to the next stage of their lives, with the necessary foundations for success, to develop their skills, training and qualifications both in and out of work and in informal and formal learning situations. We will give particular priority to improving the skills and employability of 14 - 24 year olds, so that they make a good start to adult life and their potential is not lost to the Kent economy.

The Challenges for the Future:

The world is changing fast, expectations are rising rapidly and a more diverse education system is developing quickly. The UK has to achieve a more educated and skilled workforce and cannot afford to lose the potential of so many young people who, if they are not educated well enough, will lead less productive and satisfying lives. The economic and social cost of educational failure is immense and too much provision that is less than good damages the life chances of children and young people. In this mix the role of the Local Authority is changing to be more ambitious, focused and strategic in bringing about educational transformation for Kent by being a strong and influential partner with schools and other providers.

In particular our priorities are to:

- Develop a new partnership relationship with all schools and other providers, based on collaboration and shared effort, to build greater capacity in the system
- Focus relentlessly on raising educational standards and support and challenge lower performing schools and other providers to improve quickly
- Support greater choice for parents and families by commissioning a sufficient and diverse supply of places in strong schools and quality early years settings
- Make the most effective and efficient use of the available resources to support improved outcomes
- Move to a more strategic commissioning and oversight role which builds capacity for improvement and brokers the best arrangements for longer term sustainable success
- Support vulnerable pupils, including children in care and pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, so that they achieve well and make good progress
- Ensure every child has fair access to all schools

- Deliver an effective school improvement strategy and procure effective support and advice services for schools
- Promote a culture of inclusion, aiming to ensure that every child and young person is able to remain included in appropriate, high quality provision;
- Promote and champion a school, education, training and skills system that delivers a range of options and pathways for all young people into higher levels of learning or employment to age 24
- Promote and champion educational excellence and provide vision and drive for a world class system

New ways of working are key to success in a more diverse educational landscape, with many different providers across the early years, schools and post 16 skills and employment sectors. This landscape requires us to drive change through strategic influence, highly effective partnership arrangements and networks in which there can be pooled effort and shared priorities, to achieve better outcomes, to increase capacity in the system and to create more innovative solutions at a time of reducing levels of resource. More successful delivery in Kent will see the emergence of new vehicles for joint working and partnership. Our priority will therefore be to ensure success for:

- School leaders to lead the system through stronger school partnerships, the Kent Association of Headteachers, working at a local level through District school forums that have strong and purposeful working relationships with the Local Children and Young People's Partnership Boards and Locality Boards in order to deliver the best opportunities and outcomes for their children and young people
- Schools to procure support services well, have real choice and be able to procure high quality services through EduKent
- The local authority to deliver a school improvement strategy based on evidence based best practice and strong school collaborations and the development of a school to school support system
- Locality based working and commissioning to pool and target resources to local needs in Districts
- Our key strategic partnerships to maximise effort and increase our capacity to transform early learning, education in schools, and post 16 learning and training so that they are truly excellent.

Key Strategic Developments in 2012

In quickening the pace of improvement we have focused attention on transforming the way we work and the delivery of services. During 2012 we have:

- Devolved the Specialist Teaching Service to a lead Special School in each District to improve support to mainstream schools for special educational needs and achieve better progress and outcomes for pupils at School Action Plus. This model is intended to improve partnership between Special schools and Mainstream schools and spread the expertise in different aspects of SEND.

- Developed a system of school to school collaboration, so that there are now 40 improvement hubs of schools with clear partnership agreements sharply focused on improving leadership, the quality of teaching and standards of attainment. This work is supported by funding from the School Funding Forum.
- Reviewed the Pupil Referral Units and developed proposals for new models of delivery in each District designed to reduce exclusions, improve support for pupils at risk of exclusion and achieve better quality of alternative provision so that pupil outcomes improve.
- Piloted a new Integrated Adolescent Support Service in four districts aimed at delivering more coordinated and targeted support and better outcomes for vulnerable adolescents. We intend to expand this approach across the whole of Kent in 2013.
- Developed the 14-24 Strategy aimed at supporting all young people to stay in education or training to age 18 and gain employment, by improving vocational pathways and qualifications, raising attainment for all 16-19 year olds, increasing apprenticeships and developing skills and employment partnerships between schools, colleges, work based learning providers and employers.
- Developed the SEND Pathfinder which is focused on delivering single assessment and integrated education, health and care plans for the families of disabled children and those with special educational needs. This is also enabling us to pilot the use of personal budgets for families to use on transport, equipment and therapy services.
- Developed the SEND Strategy which is aimed at improving the local offer in Special and mainstream schools, providing better support for parents, improving early intervention and prevention, delivering more integrated services and joint commissioning across education, health and social care and achieving better progress and outcomes for all children and young people with a disability or special educational needs.
- Developed our approach to District based working, allocating resources and staff more clearly to district teams so that service delivery can be more coordinated and early help and earlier intervention for vulnerable children can be more accessible for schools and families.
- Developed the Education Commissioning Plan which sets out the need for new early years and school provision and identifies where capital funding will be used to provide new schools and additional classes up to 2014. The Plan will be revised and updated on an annual basis.
- Developed Edukent so that it is supported by more effective business planning, marketing and tailor made procurement of services for schools.

Progress in 2012 and where are we now?

We have set very challenging and aspirational improvement targets and in 2012 there were positive indications that we are achieving progress.

In 2012 we achieved progress in the following areas:

- Improved results for Kent children at every key stage of education from pre-school age to 19 years.
- Kent is **top** of its statistical neighbour group in the **Early Years Foundation Stage**, and results are now well above the national average. 72% of children achieve a good level of development, up from 46%. The Free School Meal (FSM) achievement gap has reduced year on year and is now significantly less than the national figure.
- At **Key Stage 1**, in reading, writing and mathematics, results are now in line with the national average and the FSM achievement gap is narrowing at a **faster rate** than nationally.
- At **Key Stage 2** we have seen the numbers getting Level 4 in both English and Maths **rise substantially** from 72% in 2011 to 78% in 2012. The FSM achievement gap has narrowed significantly from 29% to 22%, close to the national figure of 20%.
- There has been an **impressive reduction** in the number of schools below the **floor standard**, from 90 primary schools in 2010 to 23 schools in 2012 and from 36 secondary schools in 2010 to 18 schools in 2012.
- At **GCSE** the number of children gaining five GCSEs at A*-C including English and Maths, has risen from 50% in 2008 to 61% in 2012. Outcomes for young people in Kent are **above the national average**, and Kent is ranked second in our statistical neighbour group.
- There has been steady narrowing of the **SEN achievement gap** at Key Stage 2 by 6% between 2010 and 2012 narrowed from 54% to 48% of children achieving Level 4 in English and maths.
- Between 2010 and 2012 **outcomes for children in care** improved at Key Stage 4 by 8.5% with 13.1% achieving at least five GCSEs at A*-C including English and maths. **Kent is above the national average** at Key Stage 4.
- Twenty-five schools have **improved** from a previous satisfactory Ofsted judgement to good since September 2012.

- The number of schools in Kent **judged good or outstanding** by Ofsted rose to 62% from 57% last year.
- The number of **early years settings** in Kent judged good or outstanding by Ofsted rose to 87%, 5% up on 2011.
- **Ofsted** has judged 73% of secondary schools in Kent and 80% of Special Schools as good or outstanding. 59% of primary schools are now good or outstanding.
- The quality of Pupil Referral Units and Alternative Provision improved to 73% good or outstanding from 56% in 2011.
- A good number of satisfactory schools **significantly improved** their Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 results in 2012, and are above the government's floor standard.
- There has been a reduction in the number of permanent exclusions, down to 192 in 2012 from 252 the previous year.
- Persistent absence rates have reduced quite significantly from last year. The percentage of pupils who are persistently absent in primary schools has dropped from 4.8% in 2010/11 to 3.5% in 2011/12. Secondary schools have again shown a sharper reduction, from 9.8% in 2010/11 to 7.0% in 2011/12.
- The number of apprenticeships has risen, and Kent is **outperforming** the South East for the number of people starting apprenticeships, particularly for 16-18 year olds. Official figures from the National Apprentice Service for 2012 are as follows:

16 – 18 year olds	2,715 – an increase of 16% from 2011
18-24 year olds	3,355 – an increase of 13% from 2011
24 years +	4,742 – an increase of 39% from 2011

- The number of **SEN statements** completed within the required timeframes has risen to 85%.
- We created **2140** new primary school places in September 2012 to meet the growing demand.
- We have opened **2** new primary schools and rebuilt **5** secondary schools, all at a total cost of **£82 million**.

These are positive trends in the right direction. However, we need to continue to be very ambitious because there is much to do to bring about the necessary improvement. Kent has a mixed economy of provision in the early years, schools and the skills and training sector, serving diverse communities with many challenges. This ranges from outstanding and good provision to a significant amount of provision (38% of schools) that is not yet good, which is

letting down children and communities some of whom are the most disadvantaged in Kent. We do not compare well with the national picture or with statistical neighbours in some key areas of our performance and this must improve more quickly.

Kent is among the lowest performing local authorities for the number of good and outstanding schools; we continue to perform poorly in our statistical neighbour groups for standards at key stages 1 and 2; our Key Stage 2 results are still below the national average; and the achievement gaps for pupils eligible for the pupil premium at Key Stages 2 and 4 are still wider than the national gaps. Kent is in the bottom quartile nationally for standards at Key Stage 2 and for the attainment levels of pupils eligible for free school meals at Key Stages 2 and 4. Disadvantaged 19 year olds in Kent also do less well than the national average. Children in care achieve below the national average for this group at Key Stage 2 and the achievement gaps for them are wider in Kent.

In 2011-12, there was a slight increase in the number of schools in an Ofsted category of concern and the number of young people aged 16-19 who are not in education, employment or training increased from 6.2% to 7.5%. The number of SEN statements completed on time is still unacceptably below target, often because there are delays with health assessments. These issues present significant challenges and impact directly on the progress and achievement of children and young people.

Early Years and School Standards

In 2012 the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and 2, GCSE and A level results for Kent all improved and this upward trend is very positive. A number of schools made very significant gains in performance, among them many schools that were previously below the floor standard.

Once again there were good improvements for children in the **Early Years Foundation Stage**, with 72% of children achieving a good level of development which is well above the national average. The results improved by 7% compared to 2011, and this includes very welcome gains in early reading, writing and emotional development, and a reduction in the achievement gap between the lowest achieving 20% and other children to well below the national achievement gap. These results place Kent in the top quartile nationally, and first place when judged against our statistical neighbours. These are East Sussex, Essex, Lancashire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Staffordshire, Swindon, Warwickshire, West Sussex, and Worcestershire.

At **Key Stage 1** the results for children attaining level 2b in reading, writing and mathematics improved by several percentage points. Standards are mostly in line with the national average but below the national average in writing and among the lowest for our statistical neighbours. The improvement is very welcome as it continues to build a stronger base for securing good progress in subsequent key stages. However performance at level 3 is no better than it was in 2007, which is very disappointing.

At **Key Stage 2** the results showed good improvement (6%) compared to previous years, with 78% of pupils attaining level 4 in both English and mathematics. Attainment at level 5 for

English and maths combined also improved by 5.6% to 27%, after five years of no improvement. These were the first signs of a significant shift in Primary school performance overall since 2008. However we are in the bottom quartile and we should be in the top quartile for local authority performance in Primary education.

Significant improvement was achieved by many of the Primary schools that were below the floor standard, which is 60% of pupils attaining level 4 in English and mathematics. Through the work of Kent Challenge, more effective school leadership and meticulous attention to improving the quality of teaching and assessment, and accelerating the progress rates of pupils, there has been a very significant reduction in the number of schools performing below the floor standard. The improved results for these schools mean that in 2012 there are 23 schools below the floor compared to 70 schools in 2011. This is excellent progress.

At **Key Stage 4**, GCSE results at 5 A*-C grades including English and mathematics improved to 61%, compared to 59% in 2011. This is above the national average. Sixty four secondary schools improved their performance, and eight schools improved their results by more than 10%.

Maths results at A*-C grades improved by 3% to 70% and English results overall were down slightly by 1% to 67%. The floor standard for secondary school performance at 5 or more GCSE grades at A*-C, including English and mathematics, increased this year to 40%. Eighteen secondary schools performed below the floor standard, compared to 29 schools that performed below the 40% benchmark in 2011. The overall 5 A*-C result for Kent improved by 4.6% to 85.6%, which is very positive.

At **A level** the proportion of students achieving 2 or more A*-E passes increased by 1.5% to 95.6%. However attainment overall at level 3 is still below the national average and below our statistical neighbours.

Closing Achievement Gaps and the Pupil Premium

Closing achievement gaps is one of the key priorities in Bold Steps, especially the gaps in outcomes between boys and girls and, compared to all pupils, the gaps for pupils with SEN and those in receipt of pupil premium funding.

School performance in Kent would be much improved if boys achieved as well as girls, in literacy especially, and the achievement gaps between FSM pupils and other pupils at each key stage were narrower than the national figures. In the 2012 results there was some very welcome progress.

In the **Early Years Foundation Stage** there was further continuous improvement. As achievement gaps tend to widen as children get older, it is particularly important to reduce the gap in the early years, so that we see a trend of improving outcomes for children in the lowest achieving 20%. In 2012 Kent continued the six year downward trend to reduce the gap between this 20% and other children, from 25.5% in 2011 to 24.8% in 2012, compared to the national gap of 30.1%. This ranks Kent in first place against statistical neighbours. It is

particularly significant to see year on year improvement for the lowest achieving 20% at the same time as outcomes overall in the early years continue to increase.

At **Key Stage 1** the attainment gap widened between boys and girls in reading to 10%, in writing to 16% and in maths to 5%. More positively, the gaps for free school meals pupils narrowed in attainment at level 2 and above, to 17% in reading, 20% in writing and 12% in maths. While these are still slightly wider than the national figures it is encouraging to see that the gap is narrowing in Kent at a faster rate than nationally in reading and mathematics. For pupils with SEN statements the gaps are wider in Kent, compared to the national figures, for attainment in reading, writing and maths.

At **Key Stage 2**, the achievement gap between boys and girls narrowed to 5%, (from 7% in 2011) which is in line with the national gender gap figure. The gap also narrowed between boys and girls in writing, although it remains wide at 12%. The gap for FSM pupils narrowed from 27% in 2011 to 22% in 2012, compared to the 2011 national gap of 20%. This is very welcome improvement. However 34% of children on free school meals did not reach level 4 in English and 33% did not reach this level in mathematics. The national figures are 26% and 27% respectively, which means Kent is in the bottom quartile for both subjects. For pupils with SEN statements the gap widened by 2% and is greater in Kent, compared to the national figures.

At **Key Stage 4**, the gender gap remains wide with 56% of boys attaining five or more GCSE A*-C grades with English and maths compared to 65% of girls. This is similar to 2011. The gap between pupils eligible for FSM only fell slightly by 0.8% to 32.9%, and this continues to be significantly greater than the national figure of 25.8%. The national FSM gap at Key Stage 4 is reducing at a faster rate compared to Kent, which is very disappointing. Once again pupils with SEN statements achieve less well in Kent, where gaps are wider compared to the GCSE achievements of other pupils.

Gaps in Rates of Progress

The percentage of FSM pupils making the expected rates of progress between key stages is better in primary schools than in secondary schools.

Many more FSM pupils make the expected progress in English and Maths between Key Stages 1 and 2 (80.8% and 75.6% respectively) than between key stages 2 and 4 (45% and 46%). The gap between FSM pupils and their peers in making the expected progress in English and Maths is much smaller between key stages 1 and 2 (7.5% and 11.1%) than between key stages 2 and 4 (26% and 27%). And a greater number of primary schools have a proportion of FSM pupils making progress in excess of the national rates in English and Maths. (40.6% and 35.1%) than secondary schools (22.7% and 21.8%).

The proportion of primary schools that have 100% of FSM pupils making the expected rates of progress in English and Maths is 35.1% and 30.9% respectively. The proportion of secondary schools is smaller, 15.1% and 16.0% respectively.

The wide variations between schools highlight aspects of good practice that need to be more widely disseminated as part of the developing collaborations between schools. In many schools there is impressive narrowing of the gaps for different groups of pupils and very effective strategies, supported by the pupil premium, to accelerate the progress of these pupils. We will build on this good practice.

Pupil Premium

In Kent £18,304,000 is in schools' budgets for the pupil premium to make more of a difference to closing achievement gaps for 2,260 less advantaged pupils. The schools where there is greatest impact in narrowing achievement gaps use the additional funding provided by the pupil premium, and other school resources, to ensure that all groups of pupils are taught to a good standard and the lowest attaining groups of pupils receive the best teaching to accelerate their progress.

Priority is given to detailed monitoring of every pupil's progress and other effective strategies including targeted small group and individual tuition to improve progress in literacy and mathematics, with a strong emphasis on the systematic development of phonics as part of a well developed approach to teaching reading and writing. More generally schools are accelerating progress by investing more time in the range and quality of assessment and feedback to pupils on their performance, provided routinely by teachers, and supporting this by teaching pupils the learning skills they need to monitor, evaluate and assess their progress against improvement goals which they understand and sometimes set for themselves. In addition schools are investing in more use of peer mentoring and tutoring, enabling pupils to teach their peers in well coordinated and structured ways using high quality resources, including digital packages which motivate and structure the learning pathway. The fundamental issue in any school is to ensure all groups of pupils receive consistently good teaching and where pupils are taught by teaching assistants to ensure that provision is also high quality and monitored carefully by teachers and senior leaders. There is abundant evidence nationally, and in local schools, to show that significant narrowing of the achievement gaps is possible and we aim to achieve greater impact on this key priority in the near future.

Provision and Outcomes for 14-24 Year Olds

The quality of education for 14-19 year olds in Kent is very variable, and while most young people do well and have very clear progression pathways to successful further and higher education and employment, too many young people experience failure early on and do not have access to the kinds of learning they need to progress to better skills and qualifications. Key Stage 4 standards have improved year on year and are above similar areas and the national average. However the variation in Secondary school performance at GCSE is wide, and achievement gaps are significant for those young people who face the greatest disadvantage. The range in performance at GCSE, five or more A*-C grades with English and mathematics, is from 20% in the lowest performing non-selective school to 79% in the highest performing school. The range for selective schools is from 86% to 100%.

It is a significant challenge for the Kent economy and the education system in the county if, for example, nearly half of all 16 year old boys are not educated to a standard that would enable them to access an apprenticeship or progress to many of the vocational and academic pathways that are available post 16.

The participation rate for 16 and 17 year olds in Kent is 88%, compared to 93% nationally. Of these 83% are in full time education, a small number are in work based learning or training and the remainder are in jobs without training or they are NEET (not in education, employment or training). In the early months of 2012 there were 2577 16-18 year olds (6.3%) who are NEET. This has now increased to 7.5%. If we are to improve this situation and achieve full participation by 2015, over 6000 more young people aged 16-18 will need to be engaged in education or employment with training over the next 3 years.

Most 16-18 year olds (62%) are in school sixth forms and the quality of provision is mostly good or better (73%) as judged by Ofsted. A-Level results have steadily improved, although on a number of measures Kent is below the national average. The number of young people attending school sixth forms or FE college achieving level 2 qualifications by the age of 19 is in line with similar areas, but too many 16-19 year olds (13.6%) spend two years on courses and achieve no improvement in their level 2 qualification. This is unacceptable.

As with every other area of education in the County the standards and skills achieved by young people aged 19 from low income backgrounds, while improved post 16, are below the national average and the gaps (33% in Kent compared to 25% nationally) between outcomes for the most vulnerable 19 year olds and their peers are not closing quickly enough. This significantly reduces their employability and access to apprenticeships and other vocational qualifications, compared to young people from more advantaged backgrounds.

As the NEET figures increase and earlier success does not carry through to the 18 to 24 year olds, more effective action is needed. Youth unemployment figures for Kent reinforce the need for further action with 18 to 24 year olds accounting for 30% of all unemployment in Kent. Many younger people are still choosing to look for employment at 16, 17 and 18 despite rising youth unemployment, in sectors that have seen the most contraction and with lower skills requirements.

At present in Kent there are real gaps in what is needed to support young people to access employment. There is no part time employment with training for 16-19 year olds, there are no pre-apprenticeship programmes, no vocational and technical qualifications with meaningful work experience and no academic courses with meaningful work experience. These are significant gaps in our provision. A key priority, therefore, is to increase work based learning to secure better routes to employment and to improve outcomes for this age group by improving learning pathways 16-19 and the quality and range of vocational education and training, including enabling more young people to take up apprenticeships.

We are seeing good progress in increasing the number of apprenticeships, which is very positive. Kent is outperforming the South East for the number of young people starting apprenticeships, particularly for 16-18 year olds. Official figures from the National Apprentice

Service for 2012 are as follows. Apprenticeships for 16 – 18 year olds have increased to 2,715, an increase of 16% from 2011. There are 3,355 apprenticeships for 18-24 year olds, which is an increase of 13% from 2011. For 24 year olds and older adults there are 4,742 apprenticeships, an increase of 39% from 2011.

Unemployment among young people is a real concern, and tackling this is one of our top priorities. Nearly 10,000 18-24 year olds in Kent are unemployed, with more than half out of work for more than three months. Kent has five of the national youth employment hotspots where youth unemployment among 18-24 year olds exceeds 20%, in Thanet, Swale, Shepway, Gravesham and Dover. We believe this requires a more targeted and intensive response as part of our improvement strategy.

The 14 to 24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy was launched for consultation in October 2012. In developing this Strategy with partners, we intend to enable young people in Kent to become better qualified and more employable; to be able to participate and achieve success in education and work based training at least until the age of 18. A key area of work within the strategy will be to bring together the world of learning to the world of work more successfully through developing high quality employability skills programmes, improving the vocational offer at ages 14 and 16, and continuing to expand apprenticeship opportunities for 16 to 24 year olds.

Ofsted Inspection Outcomes

At present 73% of Secondary schools in Kent and 80% of Special schools are good or outstanding. Only 59% of Primary schools are good or outstanding and we know this must improve quickly. Overall 62% of Kent schools are good or better, compared to the national average of 70%.

In Ofsted's latest Annual Report, Kent is placed tenth from the bottom of the list of local authorities, with 55% of pupils attending a good or outstanding Primary school. In the top performing local authorities 90% of primary age pupils attend a good or better school. This is clearly unacceptable. It means 50,496 for primary age do not attend a good school. This is one of the top priorities in our school improvement programme and we have set ambitious targets for increasing the number of good schools by 2016.

There are positive indications that the situation is improving. There have been 45 inspections since the beginning of the 2012 school year, 30 schools (66%) were rated as good and among these 25 schools improved from a previous satisfactory judgement. This is very encouraging. We also know that many 'satisfactory' or 'requires improvement' schools are well led and making good progress, and a good number of these schools significantly improved their Key Stage 2 results in 2012, so that we can be more confident of a future good inspection outcome. We expect this positive trend to continue and to gather pace towards our ambitious target of at least 85% of primary and secondary schools and 100% of special schools to be judged good or outstanding by Ofsted by 2015. This is deliberately ambitious in order to challenge ourselves to do much better very soon.

All schools currently rated as inadequate (19 schools) and as 'requires improvement' are working closely with the Kent Challenge school improvement programme. There are 189 schools requiring improvement, including 160 Primary schools, 20 Secondary schools, 5 Special schools and 4 Pupil Referral Units.

The Ofsted Annual Report is rightly critical of some local authorities for not taking their school improvement responsibilities seriously enough and for not using the available powers of intervention and support to accelerate improvement, address decline and prevent school failure. We are determined to do everything we can, within the framework of government policy and through our own local initiative, to bring about dramatic improvement in the quality of schools in Kent.

Exclusions

During the 2012 academic year permanent exclusions in Kent reduced by 16%, to 192 from 252 in 2011. The new target by 2016 is to reduce the number of permanent exclusions to no more than 40. The strategy to reduce exclusions includes the review of the Pupil Referral Units and Alternative provision, to improve more inclusive and collaborative work between schools in each District. It also includes better monitoring of fixed-term exclusions, and more targeted earlier intervention to support pupils at risk of exclusion. Some of this will be provided by the new PRU models of delivery and the new Integrated Adolescent Support Service. .

The PRU review is well underway with new delivery models for PRUs being developed in all of the districts to meet local need. Overall there has been a strong consensus for increased local management of PRU provision which are expected to lead to significant reductions in permanent exclusions, stronger shared responsibility for some of our most vulnerable learners and the further development of local solutions. Our aim is to have more flexible provision, fewer exclusions, better support for reintegration into mainstream schools and improved outcomes for the pupils who follow alternative curriculum pathways. We also intend to develop high quality appropriate progression pathways for these young people at 16.

Attendance

Attendance rates for Kent pupils have improved in the last year. Figures released by the DfE that combine Autumn 2011 and Spring 2012 absence data indicate that primary schools overall absence has reduced by 0.6% from 2010/11. Secondary schools have seen a bigger reduction of 0.8% from 6.7% in 2010/11 to 5.9% in 2011/12.

Persistent absence rates have reduced quite significantly from last year. The percentage of pupils who are persistently absent in primary schools has dropped from 4.8% in 2011 to 3.5% in 2012. Secondary schools have again shown a sharper reduction, from 9.8% in 2011 to 7.0% in 2012. These figures are for the new DfE Persistent Absence indicator, which means a pupil is classed as persistently absent if they miss 15% or more of possible sessions. All data published by the DfE includes academies.

To achieve further improvements in attendance we will work with schools to identify and implement earlier intervention measures which encourage pupil re-engagement and the reduction of persistent absenteeism.

Commissioning Education Provision

We are seeing a significant increase in pupil numbers requiring substantial expansion of school places. In 2012 we published the Education Commissioning Plan, which sets out forecasts in each area of Kent to 2017, with more detailed plans for new school places to 2014. We will keep this under constant review and publish a revised Plan in autumn 2013.

To illustrate this, since 2002 the birth rate in Kent has increased from 56 births per 1000 women aged 15-44 years to 65.5 in 2011. Consequently, cohort sizes have increased from 14,600 in 2002 to 17,600 in 2011. In order to meet this need we have added 2140 primary school places in the period 2010 to 2012 and a small amount of additional secondary provision. We plan to add a further 2000 Year Reception places across 50 schools in order to meet the need between 2013 and September 2016.

For September 2013 there are clear plans to increase school places in ten Districts to meet demand. There are public consultation processes relating to 33 schools, which if agreed will add 820 Reception class places for 2013.

Secondary school rolls in Kent will fall until 2016, then rise during the period 2016/17 to 2019/20. The profile will be different in specific localities.

In 2011-2012 the Local Authority has opened 2 new primary schools and completed the rebuilding of 5 secondary schools, at a total cost of £82 million. We have also made progress in taking forward plans to improve 9 Special school buildings, to complete the capital programme for these schools.

Our Future Targets and Priorities:

As there is much to do we are aiming for outcomes that are very ambitious and challenging. We are determined to pursue them relentlessly and we believe we have the ways to achieve them. As part of our ongoing discussions and partnership with Headteachers, governors and other stakeholders there is a good level of shared ambition to achieve the following improvements in the period leading up to 2016.

In 2013-14 we will:

- Develop school to school collaboration further to achieve a faster rate of improvement in the quality of schools and the outcomes for pupils, including reducing achievement gaps.
- Work with outstanding and good schools to increase their capacity to sponsor schools requiring improvement, through academy or other arrangements
- Deliver a new and improved model in each District for Pupil Referral Units and Alternative Curriculum provision to reduce exclusions further, and improve the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils.
- Extend the Integrated Adolescent Support Service across the whole of Kent and as a result achieve more coordinated and targeted support and better outcomes for vulnerable adolescents.
- Deliver the improvements set out in the 14-24 strategy, including fewer NEETs, more young people staying in education or training to age 17 and 18, improved youth employment, a better vocational offer, improved attainment for all 16-19 year olds, a further increase in apprenticeships and more effective partnerships between schools, colleges, work based learning providers and employers.
- Expand the SEND Pathfinder and deliver a Kent version of single assessment and integrated education, health and care plans for the families of disabled children and those with special educational needs, together with personal budgets for families to use on transport, equipment and therapy services.
- Deliver the SEND Strategy to achieve improvements in Special and mainstream schools, better support for parents leading to fewer tribunals, improving early intervention and prevention so that there is a reduction in statutory referrals, and delivery of more integrated services and joint commissioning across education, health and social care. The overarching goal is to achieve better progress and outcomes for all children and young people with a disability or special educational needs.
- Improve the efficiency and reduce the rising costs of SEN transport
- Continue to improve District based working, so that more decision making and coordination of services for children and young people happens locally through school collaborations and better integrated working between education, health and social care. A key development will be the successful establishment of local Children and Young People's Partnership Boards.

- Revise and update the Education Commissioning Plan so that it includes clear plans for additional early years, SEN and school place provision in detail up to 2015, with reliable forecasts for provision up to 2018.
- Develop the Kent Association of Headteachers further to support school to school improvement and partnerships.
- Develop the Kent Employment, Learning and Skills Partnership Board to oversee and drive the implementation of the 14-24 Strategy, monitor its progress and commission new activity and provision to ensure its success.
- Develop Edukent further to procure better services for schools to improve outcomes, at competitive cost and expand the trading of services to more schools in and beyond Kent.

To ensure all pupils meet their full potential, we will achieve the following by 2016

- Foundation Stage outcomes for 5 year olds will continue to improve so that the percentage of children achieving the expected level of development in all aspects of learning will improve by 8%, compared to the 2012 baseline, especially in language and literacy and in emotional and social development.
- In the Foundation Stage the number of children achieving at least 78 points will improve to 75 % of children in Kent working at the expected level, which is above the current national average.
- Key stage 1 attainment will be amongst the best for our statistical neighbours and improve to at least 82% of pupils attaining level 2b in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Key stage 2 attainment will be amongst the best for our statistical neighbours, above the national average and improve to at least 87% of pupils attaining level 4 in English and mathematics, and 90% pupils achieving 2 levels of progress.
- Key stage 4 attainment will be amongst the best for our statistical neighbours and improve to at least 70% of pupils attaining 5 good GCSEs including English and mathematics
- The achievement gaps at key stages 2 and 4 will continue to reduce from the 2012 baseline, and be less than the national gap figures for pupils from low income backgrounds, children in care and pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.

- We will reduce the number of KCC schools in an Ofsted category of concern year by year, so that by 2015 no schools will be in this category. We will maintain this for 2016.
- There will be more good schools, with at least 85% of primary and secondary schools judged as good or outstanding. All special schools will be good or outstanding.
- At least 95% of secondary schools will be performing above the floor standard and no primary schools will be performing below the current 60% level 4 floor standard.
- All schools will either be succeeding, by achieving good outcomes for all groups of pupils, and where there has been a history of underperformance the schools will be improving and performing above the floor standards as part of a sponsored academy arrangement or federation with good leadership capacity.
- In nearly all schools (90%) teaching will be consistently good.
- We will have fully implemented the requirements of the Children and Families Bill to have in place integrated education, health and care plans.
- We will have reduced the number of pupils requiring a statutory response to their special educational needs by developing more effective early intervention.
- 95% of SEN statutory assessments will be completed within timescales and pupils with statements will be making good progress and achieve above average outcomes when compared with national benchmarks.
- We will reduce the number of independent and non maintained special school placements by 15% to ensure the needs of more Kent children are met in their locality, by developing our SEN strategy to provide more local and cost effective provision.
- Every child and young person will be on the roll of a school, academy or pupil referral unit.
- **We will improve** children and young people's attendance by supporting the reduction of persistent absence to 2% in primary and 5.5% in secondary by 2014 and to 1.5% in primary and 4.5% in secondary by 2016.
- No children and young people in care will be excluded from school, fewer than 10% will be persistently absent and their attainment will improve year on year from the 2012 baseline and be above the national average. The achievement gaps at key stages 2 and 4 will be less than the national gaps.
- With the delivery of new models for PRUs and Alternative Curriculum provision for pupils aged 14-19, there will be fewer than 40 pupils permanently excluded from school by 2016 and outcomes for pupils following alternative curriculum programmes will have increased year on year from the 2012 baseline.

- All young people attending a PRU will have a positive learning or training destination at ages 16 and 17.
- We will help parents to access a preferred school place for their child by increasing online admission applications to 95% and increase the number of parents who get their first preference of school to above 90%. First and second preferences combined will improve to 95%.
- Children Missing Education will be identified, tracked and monitored, with 70% being placed in suitable education within 30 days of becoming known.
- We will maintain between 5% and 7% surplus capacity in school places and ensure we deliver additional school places in line with demand and parental preferences, each year as set out in the Education Commissioning Plan to 2016.

To shape education and skills around the needs of the Kent economy we will achieve the following by 2016:

- There will be full participation in education and work based training for all 16-18 year olds following year on year reductions in the NEET figures to no more than 1%.
- The employability skills of 19 year olds will have improved, especially in English and mathematics, so that level 2 attainment at age 19 is well above the national average
- There will be fewer young people who achieve no improvement in qualifications between the ages of 16 and 19, so that this number reduces to less than 5%.
- The outcomes for 19 year olds from disadvantaged backgrounds will be above the national average and the achievement gap between this group and other students will have reduced by 10% from the 2012 baseline.
- We will have established a successful pre-apprenticeship and level 1 programme for 17 year olds who are unable to achieve a level 2 apprenticeship.
- The uptake of level 2 and 3 vocational training in skills shortage areas will increase by 10%
- The Kent Apprenticeship scheme will continue with at least 88 apprentices taken on each year, totalling 400 successful apprenticeships delivered by KCC by 2016
- At least 50% of schools will have provided one or more apprenticeships which have been taken up successfully by young people

- There will be a significant impact on unemployment among 18-24 year olds so that current levels reduce by 4000 to below 2008 levels
- The number of assisted employment opportunities for vulnerable learners with learning difficulties and disabilities will increase by 15%
- Each district in Kent will have effective partnership working for 14-19 year olds, involving KCC, schools, colleges, work based learning providers, employers and other agencies.
- Attainment in English and mathematics will improve so that at least 50% of 16 year olds that do not attain level 2 will achieve the qualification by age 17.
- The number of young people, especially those from low income backgrounds, aged 16 with skills below level 2, to achieve a level 2 qualification and progress to level 3 by age 18 will increase by 20%.
- The number of 16-19 year olds who follow courses and do not raise their level of qualification will decrease to below 5%.
- Advanced level performance in Kent will be above the national average on all measures.
- There will be improved participation, provision and outcomes for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities and all young people with learning difficulties and disabilities aged 16-19 in Special Schools will have access to appropriate provision.
- All young people aged 16 to 19 will be tracked by the LA working in partnership with schools and colleges so that their participation can be monitored, as required by statutory duty.
- Youth Employment and Learning Zones in Thanet, Swale, Shepway, Gravesham and Dover will reduce unemployment for 16 to 24 to below the national average.

Getting There

In order to bring about these rapid improvements we will put most of our effort into delivering well thought out strategies which deliver systematic and sharply focused work to:

- Commission and expand educational provision in early years, schools, 14-19 and for SEND pupils, so that we meet demand with good provision.
- Develop District based working so that there is more coordinated and integrated work between schools, early years settings, education services, health, social care and other partners.
- Continue to strengthen the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 so that outcomes in the early years of learning perform above average, with year on year reductions in achievement gaps
- Work with schools and other providers to raise standards at Key Stages 2, 4 and 5 and ensure no schools are below floor standards.
- Support all schools to achieve well in the basics of literacy and mathematics, especially in reading and writing by age 6
- Support schools in a targeted way to be rapidly improving so that all schools are at least good schools
- Provide high quality performance data at school, district and county levels to sharply focus improvement and identify and learn from rapidly improving trends
- Focus on improvement and innovation in teaching and learning and expand the use of the 'Every Lesson Counts' programme so that satisfactory teaching improves to good very quickly
- Recognise the best schools, teachers and leaders and use them effectively across the system to spread best practice
- Encourage and promote more effective school partnerships and collaboration, and sponsored academy arrangements by more Kent outstanding schools where that will bring about more rapid improvement
- Work in close cooperation with the National College, teaching school alliances and Kent NLEs and LLEs to support school improvement in a coordinated way across the county
- Continue to develop the SEN pathfinder, and integrated services for disabled children and those with complex learning needs, so that we are well prepared to deliver improvements in SEND and integrated education, health and care plans by 2014
- Support and disseminate system wide innovation and experimentation, especially in the design of the curriculum, the development of new provision and better models of support for vulnerable learners

A key means of getting there is to promote system leadership and maximise the use of existing good capacity in Kent. System leaders build partnerships of support that focus effort and energy in the same direction to ensure improvement is sustained and the pace of change increases. In world class systems 'poor to fair' schools become good schools quickly and performance gains are significant in a short time because the influence of the best performing schools is effectively spread around the system.

A more effective and longer term sustainable strategy for school improvement and developments in teaching quality and leadership capacity requires these kinds of collaboration within and between schools, and it is a key role for the local authority to support and facilitate this way of working.

These ambitious improvements in children and young people's educational outcomes and employability, and in the quality of Kent schools, early years providers and post 16 learning and skills providers, are supported by detailed service plans with year on year milestones and performance measures. A detailed performance framework is attached as an appendix to this document.

Delivery plans have been set out in the 14-24 Strategy, the Early Years and School Improvement plans, the Education Commissioning Plan, the development plan for the Kent Association of Headteachers, the business plan for Edukent, the SEN strategy and the improvement plan for the PRUs.

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