



PAPER B

Purpose: For Noting

Committee report

Committee	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS
Date	5 MARCH 2020
Title	THE ATTAINMENT OF PUPILS IN ISLE OF WIGHT SCHOOLS 2019
Report of	DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Standards at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage in Isle of Wight schools have maintained performance at or slightly above the national average, sustaining significant improvements made over the past five years.
2. At the end of primary education, in the government's measure of the proportion of children achieving Age-Related Expectations (ARE) or above in reading, writing and mathematics combined, Isle of Wight schools have improved standards in 2019. This is both in relation to previous performance and against the national averages. This is underpinned by improvements in performance in each of the three separate subjects. Whilst, further improvements remain a priority, these gains are amongst the strongest achieved in all local authority areas in 2019
3. Following the evaluation of the 2018 secondary school performance measures, changes were made to the way in which the local authority supported and challenged maintained schools. Changes have also been made to school leadership. The combination of these changes has led to an improvement in the performance of the local authority overall against the Department for Education's preferred measures at the end of secondary school education.
4. The Policy and Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the analysis of results for the end of early years, primary and secondary education and the actions that will be taken as a result by the local authority, which are presented by educational stage in this report.

BACKGROUND

5. Various versions of school performance data are published by the Department for Education over the six-month period following pupils sitting their Key Stage 2 national curriculum tests or their GCSEs. This paper uses the final published Key Stage 2 data but at the time of writing the final GCSE data is still unavailable. Therefore, the GCSE data is drawn from the provisional data release and does not take into account of any changes following schools' requests to have GCSE papers remarked.
6. Secondary schools have been through an unprecedented series of changes over the past four years, with significant reforms to the nature and content of GCSE courses and other qualifications, their assessment and school performance metrics. Whilst potentially we are now looking at a more settled period of time to enable these changes to bed down, it is important to recognise the challenges that both schools and their pupils have faced through this time. It is also important to recognise that this also presents challenges to looking at trends over time. These really need to be done against the national figures as a benchmark.
7. It is also important to recognise the change in context of the maintained secondary schools on the Isle of Wight over the past two years. Leadership in the four maintained schools has changed in the past two years.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

8. Standards at the end of the foundation stage, as measured by the proportion of pupils who have reached a Good Level of Development (GLD) have compared favourably with national standards for several years. The IOW has seen dramatic improvements over the last five years in GLD to a point where attainment has been broadly comparable with national average for three consecutive years. It is difficult to attribute the minor fluctuations in most recent year outcomes to any issue with provision in early years settings and schools especially given the relatively small numbers of children in each cohort. Relatively small statistical changes are likely to be attributable to minor variations in the pupil characteristics in each cohort. The 1.5% reduction in GLD attainment from 2018 to 2019 equates to 20 fewer achieving GLD.

Good Level of Development (GLD)	2019	2018	2017
National	71.8%	71.5%	70.7%
IOW	71.5%	73.0%	71.2%

9. There are several actions planned to support improved provision and practice of adults working with young children and, therefore, outcomes for 2019/20. Developing the confidence, willingness and capability of teachers to meet the unique learning needs of all children and, most importantly, the most vulnerable is key.
10. Whilst the EYFS data is captured at the end of the reception year in school (YR), the EYFS stage covers children from 0-5 years of age. The focus of our support therefore targets three distinct groups – schools, settings and parents. Development

will predominantly focus upon the following areas of learning - Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development, Communication and Language, and Literacy and the importance of the Home Learning Environment (HLE)

11. EYFS outcomes remain positive and indicate that most children achieve in line with National expectations and are being well prepared for Key Stage 1 (KS1).

End of Primary Education: Key Stage Two (KS2)

12. Improvement in levels of attainment of children at the end of primary education has been a strategic priority since the inception of the partnership between Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Standards rise when the quality of leadership and teaching is consistently good. Evaluation through monitoring in schools, especially those where the improvement has been most needed, has indicated that this improvement has been happening. This has been validated by the commentary in Ofsted reports over time.
13. Local authority support and challenge focussed particularly on the most poorly performing primary schools. Improving the outcomes in the weakest performing schools is a key element of any system wide improvement. Following the challenge and support from the local authority, the performance of this group of the most poorly performing schools has improved significantly over the two-year period so that in 2018 they had shown an 18% improvement against a national improvement of 10%.
14. Disappointingly in 2018, schools that were no longer supported so intensively did not consistently sustain the standards attained in 2017 which meant that some gains were lost, and overall performance dipped. However, there is a much-improved picture in 2019 as a result of the strategies for improvement implemented.
15. Overall, in the government's measure of the proportion of children achieving Age-Related Expectations (ARE) or above in reading, writing and mathematics combined, Isle of Wight schools have further improved standards. This is both in relation to previous performance and against the national averages where a significant reduction the gap is noteworthy, from -11% in 2018 to -6% in 2019. This increase in overall attainment represents the third most improved LA performance from 2018 to 2019 across the Country.
16. The table below sets out the proportion of pupils reaching age related expectations (ARE) in reading, writing and mathematics combined

Reading, Writing and Mathematics (ARE)	2019	2018	2017
National	65%	64%	61%
Isle of Wight	59%	54%	55%

17. Figures also show the Island improved at a faster rate than the national average across all three subject areas from 2018, including an eight per cent improvement in mathematics.

18. In reading, 71 per cent of children achieved ARE or above, an increase of two per cent on last year. Nationally, the average fell from 75 to 73 per cent.

Reading	2019	2018	2017
IOW	71%	69%	72%
National	73%	75%	71%

19. In writing, 74 per cent of pupils reached the ARE benchmark, a rise of one per cent, compared to the national average which remained unchanged at 78 per cent.

Writing	2019	2018	2017
IOW	74%	73%	72%
National	78%	78%	76%

20. In mathematics, 74 per cent of children achieved ARE or above, an eight per cent improvement, compared to the national figure which rose by three per cent, to 79 per cent.

Mathematics	2019	2018	2017
IOW	74%	66%	69%
National	79%	76%	75%

21. These figures show that, when compared with other local authorities, we were the second most improved in mathematics, the fifth most improved in reading and 19th equal most improved in writing.

22. To help schools secure these improvements, the local authority has implemented two specific new strategies; raising attainment in mathematics in twenty lowest performing schools and changing its practice around the visit of the school's linked inspector.

23. As previously indicated, the Local Authority secured significant funding from the DfE's Strategic School Improvement Fund in 2017 to run a programme with twenty schools to address underperformance in mathematics. The results of this work were not due until the 2019 national curriculum tests. The review of standards in these project schools indicates an average improvement of 15% in the proportion of children reaching ARE in mathematics. Indeed, it is this significant increase that largely accounts for the overall 8% improvement in the IOW.

24. The project focused on the weaknesses identified in specific children's mathematical understanding, diagnosed with expert support that also focused teachers' planning on those curriculum areas. At the same time, expert leadership support, modelled to headteachers how regular monitoring and evaluation of pupils' progress should drive professional support and development. This evolved over the programme towards joint practice and then externally monitored evaluation of skills developed.

25. Building in sustainability, has been a key principle through the project, which has now finished. This is dependent upon leaders and teachers now continuing this focus and spreading the practices to other cohorts of children and teachers. To that end there is a three-part strategy involving developing a cadre of Island based teachers who can model effective practice, drawing upon nationally funded subject knowledge training and providing further leadership support to some project schools where progress appears more vulnerable.
26. In relation to the work of linked inspectors, there is a change to the frequency and focus on contacts. Rather than this being an annual visit as has happened in the past, this will now be a programme of termly visits to all schools that will focus on key actions of the school improvement cycle at the appropriate points in the year. Groups of schools will also be meeting with local authority officers between these visits to further share good practice and thinking in a structured, planned approach that ties in with the school improvement cycle so that school improvement processes become embedded in schools.

End of Secondary Education: KS4

27. This measures the proportion of pupils who achieve a grade 4 or better (equivalent to old grade C) in both a qualifying English GCSE subject and mathematics.

	2019	2018	2017
National	64%	64%	64%
Isle of Wight	58%	54%	55%

28. Whilst the national figures have remained unchanged over the past three years, there has been a significant improvement in the overall figure for Isle of Wight secondary schools in 2019, closing the gap on national figure.
29. Following the evaluation of schools' performance in 2018, the nature of the support received by maintained schools from the local authority was changed. Schools which have been in receipt of this support have generally improved from their previous performance; schools which were not have generally slipped back on their 2018 results. The gains made in the supported schools have outweighed this so the figure for the LA overall has improved.
30. The improvement in these school's performance has been underpinned by improvements in the performance in the separate English and mathematics GCSEs
31. The proportion of pupils awarded a grade 4 or better nationally in English Language remains unchanged from 2018, against a 2% improvement for the local authority. The improvement in this figure for Isle of Wight schools means that the LA's performance is now broadly in line with that nationally, with the gap closing by 8% with the national figures over three years.

	% 4+ in an English 2019	% 4+ in an English 2018	% 4+ in an English 2017
National	70	70	76
Isle of Wight	69	67	68

32. Whilst there has been an improvement in performance in English, it has been the improvement in mathematics that has particularly driven the improvement in The Basics.

33. National figures for the proportion of pupils who achieve a grade 4 or better in mathematics have remained broadly unchanged over previous years. Against this there has been a large improvement in performance for the Isle of Wight as a whole, with the proportion of pupils being awarded a grade 4 or better improving by 6% from 2018. As a result of this, the gap with the national figure has closed significantly over the past three years.

34. Schools that received local authority support in this area have generally improved their mathematics results and it is this improvement that has underpinned the improvement in the overall figures for the local authority.

	% 4+ in mathematics 2019	% 4+ in mathematics 2018	% 4+ in mathematics 2017
National	70	71	70
Isle of Wight	68	62	63

35. In 2019, the overall performance for the Isle of Wight in both English and mathematics was broadly in line with both national averages. Furthermore, the performance in both subjects is now comparable. In the past, one of the subject areas has always lagged the other.

36. Schools need to maintain strong oversight of pupils' performance in both these subject areas. It is important to ensure that pupils who are likely to achieve grade 4 or above in English are also likely to achieve a grade 4 or above in mathematics, and vice versa. Nationally, The Basics figure is 6% lower than the lower of the two separate subjects (English is 70%, The Basics is 64%). This gives an indication the proportion of pupils who did well in one subject rather than the two. On the Isle of Wight, the difference between the individual subjects and the overall is 10%. This indicates that there is still an on-going need for schools to secure this oversight more effectively.

The English Baccalaureate (EBacc)

37. This measure shows the average score that pupils have achieved across the EBacc subjects (English Language, English Literature, mathematics, two sciences, a modern or ancient language, and either history or geography).

38. The calculation of this average is not based on the number of pupils who actually studied this combination of subjects but on the total number of pupils in the cohort. If a relatively small number of pupils study this combination of subjects, it will therefore “supress” the overall average score, whatever grades these pupils receive. This measure is therefore dependant on the number of pupils studying the “right” combination of subjects as much as it is on their performance in these subjects.
39. The average score for pupils on the Isle of Wight improved in 2019 to 3.53, from 3.38 in 2018 against a national improvement from 4.04 to 4.06 in 2019

Attainment 8 (A8)

40. A8 measures pupils’ average performance across eight subjects from a tightly defined set that includes an English, mathematics, three EBacc subjects and 3 other subjects. A8 is not a threshold measure, it is again an average measure based on pupils studying the “right” combination of subjects. If pupils study other combinations, their performance will not count towards this measure. As with the average EBacc level, then, it is as much a measure based on the combination of subjects as it is on performance.
41. A8 is a measure used to compare school performance. Pupils are unaware of their individual figure. It is not used as an entry qualification for sixth form or college courses.
42. The table below shows that A8 in Isle of Wight schools has improved significantly upon 2018 against a static national picture.

A8	2019	2018	2017
Isle of Wight	41.6	40.5	40.1
National	46.5	46.5	46.4

43. As with the improvements identified previously, schools which have been in receipt of local authority support have generally improved their performance in this area, and it is their improvements that have underpinned the improvement in the figures for the local authority as a whole.

Progress 8 (P8)

44. P8 is a measure of the progress pupils have made from KS2 across the A8 basket of subjects relative to their peers nationally. National performance information is used to estimate the A8 score of each pupil based on their end of primary performance in reading and mathematics. This is subtracted from their actual A8 score and the mean of the difference calculated across the school. P8 is therefore a relative measure, dependant on pupils’ performance nationally. Schools cannot predict with any accuracy what it might be ahead of the examinations.
45. In a school with a P8 of zero, pupils have on average performed in line with pupils with similar starting points nationally. If the score is positive, then pupils have made more progress from their starting points than nationally; if it is negative, then pupils have made correspondingly less progress.

46. As P8 uses pupils' A8 scores for its basis, it too is sensitive to the combination of subjects that pupils have taken, as well as their performance in these subjects.

47. Again, P8 is a figure used to compare schools rather than individual pupils.

	P8 2019	P8 2018	P8 2017
National	-0.03	-0.02	-0.03
Isle of Wight	-0.34	-0.39	-0.36

48. There has been an improvement in the P8 figure for the Isle of Wight as a whole. Whilst the figure is still below that nationally, the fact that it has improved shows that the gains identified in the other three performance measures are not due to pupils solely entering the school at a higher level. These improvements have been as a result of pupils making better progress from their starting points than has been the case previously.

49. Again, all the schools which have been in receipt of local authority support have generally improved their P8 scores and it is this which has led to the improvement in the overall figures for the local authority.

Summary

50. It is now vital that the local authority continues to work closely with school leaders to secure the green shoots of improvement shown in the 2019 GCSE performance measures. We are clear that the way in which we have been supporting and challenging secondary schools through 2018-19 alongside the developments in school leadership have brought about improvement. We need to continue this approach for at least the next year alongside helping schools to embed the changes that they have made to date to secure further improvement.

FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

51. There are no additional financial considerations resulting from the recommendations in this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

52. The "Duty to promote high standards in primary and secondary education," originates from the 1996 Education Act. This provision was amended in the 2006 Education and Inspections Act to include, "...and the fulfilment of potential." The 2006 Act spells out the responsibility of the Local Authority to promote high standards; ensure fair access and promote the fulfilment of every child's educational potential. This duty applies to children of compulsory school age and those of any age (up to 20) who are registered as pupils at maintained schools.

53. It is the 2006 Act which also introduces the inspection of LA statutory functions by Ofsted. "The Framework for Inspection of Local Authority Arrangements for Supporting School Improvement," based upon sections 135 and 136 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, was published in May 2013. The LA duty to write an action plan following an unsatisfactory Ofsted inspection had already been introduced in the 2005 Education Act.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

54. Improved educational outcomes benefit all groups but have the most marked impact upon the life chances of the most vulnerable.

SECTION 17 CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

55. The attainment of better educational outcomes has a direct impact upon future economic wellbeing and, therefore, upon potential involvement in criminal activity. Success at school promotes self-esteem, attendance and good behaviour leading to greater community cohesion, adult independence and active citizenship.

RISK MANAGEMENT

56. A clear understanding of examination results and priorities for improving them is necessary in order to improve school performance of the Isle of Wight and mitigate against poor educational outcomes for children and young people.

EVALUATION

57. Standards have generally been secured or have improved at the end of early years, primary and secondary education. Improving standards of attainment at all key stages remains a priority for the Isle of Wight.

RECOMMENDATION

58. That the Policy and Scrutiny Committee notes the outcomes at the end of early years, primary and secondary education on the Isle of Wight.

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