



## **PAPER D**

Purpose: For Noting

# Committee report

Committee	<b>POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES</b>
Date	<b>7 MARCH 2019</b>
Title	<b>THE ATTAINMENT OF PUPILS IN ISLE OF WIGHT SCHOOLS 2018</b>
Report of	<b>DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES</b>

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Standards at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage have remained strongly above the national average in Isle of Wight schools, continuing to improve over the past five-year period.
2. By the end of primary education, schools that had previously been performing weakly have improved at well above the national rate since 2016. However, of the 20 schools that were performing above the national average in 2017, results in approximately half of them have fallen by 10% or more. This has effectively cancelled out the improvement shown in the weakest schools, with the result that standards at the end of primary education are little changed since 2017.
3. New school performance measures for the end of secondary education introduced in 2016 rely on pupils taking "counting" combinations of subjects as well as performing well in them. The Isle of Wight average falls below that nationally for these metrics. This is due to pupils not studying "counting" combinations of subjects as much as it is a result of underperformance. The nature of the curriculum that pupils are following at Key Stage 4 in Isle of Wight schools is having a negative impact on the school performance metrics.
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 the following 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 any changes following schools' request to have GCSE papers remarked.
6. We are coming to the end of a four-year period of significant changes to school performance metrics and the implementation of new, harder GCSE examinations. The metrics were changed in 2016, with subsequent changes to the calculations used in 2017 and 2018. In 2017 the new, more challenging English and mathematics GCSEs were examined for the first time. Performance in these is measured on a number scale from 1 to 9 – with 9 being the highest - rather than using the old letters.

There is little meaningful correlation between the old letter grades and the new numbers other than a new grade 4 being broadly equivalent to the old grade C. In 2018 it has been the turn of nearly all other GCSE subjects to be replaced by these new examinations, and these subjects are now graded on the basis of numbers rather than letters.

7. Also in 2018, the DfE have changed one of the metrics. Previously, schools were measured on the proportion of pupils who passed the English Baccalaureate. This year schools are measured on the average grade pupils have achieved.
8. These changes present challenges in identifying trends over time in school performance. However, the overwhelming majority of changes have now taken place so there is a sense in which the 2018 data represents a baseline against which future trends can be identified.

## STRATEGIC CONTEXT

### **9. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**

- 9.1. 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 been securely above those nationally over the past three years (and indeed beyond). Since 2013, standards have improved every year (apart from in 2017) and have done so at a faster rate than nationally.

Good Level of Development (GLD)	2018	2017	2016
National	71.5%	70.7%	69.3%
IOW	73.0%	71.2%	71.8%

- 9.2. Schools have made good use of the support they have received from the Early Years Team in ensuring children make a good start to their education in Isle of Wight schools.

## 10. End of Primary Education

The changes in 2016 to the national curriculum programmes of study but more particularly its assessment slowed the relative rate of improvement that had been seen in Isle of Wight schools previously.

- 10.1. Following this, the local authority adopted a two-part approach to ensuring that standards improved in subsequent years.
- 10.2. The first part of this lay with local authority support and challenge focussing 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. Indeed, part of the DfE's approach to improving schools nationally lies with defining a group of schools that are judged to be "below floor standards".
- 10.3. We took a broader view of underperformance than the DfE's "floor standards" and identified a group of nine schools that had performed 15% or more below the national average for the proportion of pupils that had reached age related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics combined.
- 10.4. 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%.
- 10.5. As a result of this, in 2018 no Isle of Wight school now falls into the DfE's group of weakest performing schools nationally – the "below floor standards" group.
- 10.6. The second part of the strategy lay with working less intensively with another group of schools whose results had dipped in the 2016 national curriculum tests. The expectation was that these schools would, with just the right level of support, "bounce back" as teachers and leaders gained a better understanding of the challenges inherent in the national curriculum revisions.
- 10.7. This proved to be the case. In 2017, there was indeed a "bounce back" that led to 20 schools (i.e. half the island's primary schools) performing in line with or above the national average. 63% of pupils in these schools reached age related expectations (ARE), against 61% nationally.
- 10.8. Whilst performance of the system overall in 2017 was below the national average, given the improvement that was beginning to manifest itself in the weakest schools and the "bounce back" shown by the stronger schools, it appeared that the Isle of Wight was placed to perform relatively well in 2018.
- 10.9. However, the overall performance of all schools in 2018 can only be described as disappointing and frustrating given the improvements that were manifest in 2017 and those that have been seen in the group of weakest performing schools. Whilst there are now no schools that fall into the category of being identified by the DfE

as the weakest performing nationally (the “below floor” schools) this does not balance out the disappointment of the overall performance.

10.10. The table below sets out the proportion of pupils reaching age related expectations (ARE) in reading, writing and mathematics combined

	2018	2017	2016
National	64%	61%	53%
Isle of Wight	54%	55%	49%

This performance is underpinned by the performance in individual subject areas

Isle of Wight	Reading %ARE	Writing %ARE	Maths %ARE
2016	64	74	63
2017	72	72	69
2018	69	73	66

National	Reading %ARE	Writing %ARE	Maths %ARE
2016	66	74	70
2017	71	76	75
2018	75	78	76

10.11. The reasons for this situation can be found within the 20 schools that “bounced back” in 2017. Generally, in any school system these would be the schools that are well-placed to drive their own improvement and also help weaker schools. However, too many schools in this group failed to secure and build upon their performance in 2017 slipping back significantly.

10.12. So in 2017 where the performance of the group was above the national average (as identified above) it fell back in 2018 to 57%, against the national average of 64%. There was a drop of 10% or more in nine schools. These tended to be the larger schools so this drop then had a disproportionate effect on the overall average. The drop was so great in four of the schools that they now find themselves performing 15% or more below the national average.

10.13. This drop was due to underperformance in both mathematics and reading, rather than in any specific subject area. This draws into question the degree to which schools have really secured appropriate expectations, are carefully and accurately looking at how well children are learning, and are making appropriate adjustments to help pupils “get back on track”.

10.14. To help schools secure this, the local authority is changing its practice around the visit of the school’s linked inspector. 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.

10.15. Performance in mathematics is still an area that needs improvement. 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 this. The results of this work are not due until the 2019 national curriculum tests. However, the DfE has independently “RAG” rated the programme as part of its evaluation as “green” and therefore in their view on track to deliver the expected improvements.

## 11. End of secondary education

### The “Basics”

11.1. Prior to 2017, this measure indicated the proportion of pupils who have achieved a C or better grade in both an English and mathematics qualifying qualification. The definition changed in 2017 to take into account the fact that pupils examined in these subjects had taken the new, harder revised GCSEs that are graded by numbers. So in 2017, to have qualified for the basics, pupils must have achieved a grade 4 or better in both subjects. This definition has remained unchanged for 2018.

	2018 new measure (% 4+ in an English and mathematics)	2017 new measure (% 4+ in an English and mathematics)	2016 old measure (% C+ in an English and mathematics)
National	64	64	63
Isle of Wight	54	55	52

11.2. Performance improved significantly against this measure in three of the seven Isle of Wight secondary schools from 2016 to 2018. However, it has declined in three others and remained static in one. As a result of this, whilst there has been a slight improvement since 2016, the gap between the Isle of Wight and national figures has not closed sufficiently.

11.3. To perform well against this measure, schools need to ensure that pupils achieve well in the separate subjects but also maintain a level of management oversight to ensure that they maximise the number of pupils who achieve well in both.

11.4. English results have declined nationally since 2016, with a particularly large drop from 2017. This drop was not seen across the island system. Whilst performance did fall in Isle of Wight schools on the introduction of the new, harder GCSE courses in English in 2017, it has stabilised and in 2018, improved against the national average.

	% 4+ in an English 2018	% 4+ in an English 2017	% C+ in an English 2016
National	70	76	75
Isle of Wight	67	68	71

11.5. There are also signs of relative improvement in mathematics, albeit a somewhat fragile improvement. Whilst there has been a 2% improvement nationally since 2016, the rate of improvement in Isle of Wight schools is over double this, with the result that the gap with the national average has closed. However, it still remains too high. There are too many pupils who entered secondary school with average attainment that did not obtain a grade 4 or better in the subject.

	% 4+ in a mathematics 2018	% 4+ in mathematics 2017	% C+ in mathematics 2016
National	71	70	69
Isle of Wight	62	63	57

11.6. As well as ensuring pupils achieve well in the English and mathematics separately, it is important that they achieve well in both subjects if the school is to perform well at this measure. This requires a level of management oversight. The Basics figure nationally 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 lower of the subject figures (mathematics, 62%) and that for The Basics (54%) is 8%. This draws into question whether there is a similar level of management oversight of performance in Isle of Wight schools as there is in schools nationally.

11.7. A further look at the data shows that 89 pupils achieved a grade 4 or better in an English qualifying subject but received a grade 3 in mathematics; 64 pupils achieved a grade 4 in mathematics but a grade 3 in English. If this imbalance had been addressed so that just half of this group had obtained grade 4 in both subjects, there would have been at least a 7% improvement in the headline figure.

## 12. The English Baccalaureate (EBacc)

12.1. In previous years this measure showed the proportion of pupils that had “achieved” the English Baccalaureate. To qualify, pupils achieved a grade 5 or better in English Language or Literature, and mathematics; Grade C or better in two sciences; a C grade or better in a language (either modern or ancient) and an A\*-C in either history or geography. This year the measure has changed to show the average score that pupils achieve across this group of subjects.

12.2. The average score for pupils on the Isle of Wight in 2018 is 3.83, against the national average of 4.04. Two schools are broadly in line with this national average, the others are below. A school’s performance against this metric is as much to do with pupils following the right combination of subjects to qualify as it is to do with the overall quality of performance of the school (a significant feature of the remaining GCSE measures). The proportion of pupils entered for the English Baccalaureate in Isle of Wight schools falls well below that nationally (24% against 39% nationally). This reduces the average grade over the entire cohort of pupils.

**13. Attainment 8 (A8)**

- 13.1. The calculation of A8 is complex, looking at 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.
- 13.2. For reasons outlined earlier, A8 figures in 2018 are not directly comparable with those from previous years.
- 13.3. Before drawing any conclusions about A8 performance, it is helpful to understand the complexity behind its calculation. The table below sets out the GCSE grades in the subjects studied by three pupils, and in the final line of the table their A8 score

GCSE subject	Pupil A (grade)	Pupil B (grade)	Pupil C (grade)
English Language	5	4	4
English Literature	4	4	4
Mathematics	4	4	4
Science 1	4	4	4
Science 2	4	4	4
History	4	4	Not studied
Religious Studies	Not studied	Not studied	4
Drama	4	5	5
Music	4	4	4
Food Technology	4	4	4
Attainment8	42	41	37

- 13.4. Each pupil has “passed” the same number of GCSEs and has the same average grade. However, pupil A has the highest A8 score. Pupil B is next and pupil C lags well behind pupil A.
- 13.5. There are three steps to calculating A8. The first step is to double the points score in English and mathematics and add them together. This gives pupil A a score of 18 and pupil B and C a score of 16.
- 13.6. This is then added to each pupils’ best three EBacc subject scores. Pupil A has studied three EBacc subjects: science 1, science 2 and history so has 12 EBacc points. Pupil B has also studied three EBacc subjects: science 1, science 2 and history and as their grades are 4s, also has 12 EBacc points. Pupil C has only studied 2 EBacc subjects: science 1 and science 2. Religious studies is not an EBacc qualifying subject. Consequently they only have 8 EBacc points.
- 13.7. This then needs to be added to the pupils’ best three open slot subject scores. For pupil A this is 12 points (4+4+4); for pupil B it is 13 points (drama is the best subject at 5 points, which is then combined with two of the others at 4 points); and for pupil C it is also 13 points (for the same reasons as outlined for pupil B).

- 13.8. This gives pupil A 42 points (18+12+12), pupil B 41 points (16+12+13) and pupil C 37 points (16+8+13). Pupil C has the lowest A8 score because they did not study 3 EBacc subjects. Pupil A has done better than pupil B because their grade 5 is in English rather than drama so gets doubled in the calculation.
- 13.9. Despite these three pupils having arguably identical performance, the combination of subjects studied and their results in these subjects has resulted in them being awarded different A8 scores. This presents a significant dilemma for schools. To what degree is it right that pupils' option choices should be determined by the need for the school to be seen to perform well?
- 13.10. The table below shows that A8 in Isle of Wight schools is below that nationally although there has been a slight improvement relative to the national figure from 2016 to 2018.

A8	2018	2017	2016
Isle of Wight	40.5	40.1	43.6
National	46.5	46.4	50.1

- 13.11. The example of the three pupils above shows the way in which the combination of subjects studied impacts on A8 figures. Given the relatively low proportion of pupils studying the EBacc identified in the previous section, it is important to understand the degree to which the curriculum is influencing the A8 figures in Isle of Wight schools.
- 13.12. If schools seek to maximise A8 performance, pupils will need to have 3 EBacc counting grades and 3 open subject counting grades (along with English and mathematics) i.e. 6 grades in total across these two areas.
- 13.13. An analysis at the level of individual pupils and the individual subjects that they took across all Isle of Wight schools shows that 738 out of 1041 pupils had the full 6 counting grades. The A8 for this group of pupils is 48.1. This is above the national figure.
- 13.14. Of course, there will be pupils included in the national figure that do not have the full six grades across the EBacc and open contributing subjects. At this stage, the proportion of pupils nationally who have 6 counting grades has not been published so it is difficult to compare what feels like a relatively low proportion in island schools with their national peers.
- 13.15. However, data has been produced showing the average number of the EBacc subject counting "slots" pupils have filled at a national, local authority and school level and this does give a helpful indication regarding subject combinations.
- 13.16. The national figures show that 2.8 slots have been filled on average per pupil. On the Isle of Wight it is significantly lower at 2.6 slots per pupil. In only two of the seven schools does the combination of subjects that pupils are studying fill the same number of slots on average as nationally. In two schools it is particularly low at 2.5 slots per pupil.



13.17. These combinations of subjects were chosen by pupils prior to commencing GCSE courses in 2016, or in some cases 2015. Schools are highly unlikely to make significant changes to their curriculum offer whilst pupils are midway through studying particular subjects.

13.18. Whilst the combination of subjects that pupils have studied has had negative impact on schools' A8 scores, it would be misleading to suggest that this is the sole reason for the underperformance relative to the national figure. It was reported last year that a greater focus is needed upon the performance of all pupils, not just those on the old grade C threshold. Whilst there have been some improvements in some schools in some subjects, the pattern is still inconsistent across the island. Schools need to rigorously focus on improving performance at higher grades and reducing the proportion of pupils achieving at the lower end, as well as ensuring that all pupils achieve a GCSE grade in the subjects they study.

#### 14. Progress 8 (P8)

14.1. 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.

14.2. 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.

14.3. 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.

	P8 2018 (new measure)	P8 2017 (new measure)	P8 2016 (old measure)
National	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03
Isle of Wight	-0.39	-0.36	-0.33
Difference	-0.42	-0.33	-0.30

	P8 2018 (new measure)
National	-0.03
Isle of Wight	-0.39
The group of 738 pupils with "6 slots"	-0.04

14.4. The overall P8 figure for Isle of Wight schools is disappointingly below the national average. However, when it is calculated for the 738 pupils who have the full six EBacc and open slots, it is in line with the national figure. This again gives an

indication of the impact that the curriculum in schools is having on the overall performance figures.

- 14.5. However, as with A8, the relative underperformance in P8 is not solely the result of subject combinations. As mentioned in the section on A8, schools need to ensure that they focus on maximising the attainment of all pupils, reducing low grades and improving the proportion of higher grades. It is important, therefore, that there is a strong understanding across all subject areas in schools regarding the standards encapsulated in the new grades and the subsequent translation into classroom expectations; that schools ensure they have the management grip so that these expectations “bite”; that schools act decisively to ensure all pupils get grades in the subjects that they study at GCSE; and that schools have shaped their curricula appropriately for their pupils.
- 14.6. In all maintained secondary schools, the linked inspector is now visiting every half-term. This is in addition to providing a level of bespoke subject focussed support for each school to provide tailored rather than generic work from Local Authority officers.
- 14.7. Furthermore, there is a focus on the role that leaders at different levels in schools need to take in respect of these issues. Consequently, we have set up professionals’ meetings for all subject areas, where heads of departments from all Isle of Wight secondary schools focus on these issues with the subject inspector from the local authority. These have been attended by all maintained schools and most of the other schools, and we have received strong, positive feedback regarding them.
- 14.8. As part of this leadership work, the Local Authority is currently setting up a secondary school deputy headteacher project group. This will meet at least termly alongside Local Authority inspectors to focus on improving expectations in Y7 and 8, as well as the curriculum offer, to build more effectively on pupils’ end of primary standards.
- 14.9. There have been difficulties in bringing about system wide improvement across the Isle of Wight secondary system due to its fragmented nature. There has been significant work through 2018 to bring school leaders together to focus on system wide priorities. This has resulted in strong engagement in the areas identified above. But also, school leaders are now meeting collectively and regularly with Local Authority representatives to begin to address improving attendance and reducing exclusions of pupils.
- 14.10. In addition, there will be training for school governors so that they are better placed to provide challenge for school leaders around the expectations of the new GCSE courses and the school’s response to these. There will also be training to help governors understand their role in overseeing the school’s curriculum and the potential challenges in its nature given current school metrics.

## FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

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

## LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

16. 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.
17. 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

18. Improved educational outcomes benefit all groups but have the most marked impact upon the life chances of the most vulnerable. Outcomes are assessed specifically against the needs of a range of vulnerable groups and the performance of children with special educational needs, those from minority ethnic backgrounds, those living in relative poverty and children in the care of the Local Authority.

## SECTION 17 CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

19. 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

20. 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

21. Standards have generally been secured or have improved at the end of early years and primary education. Improving performance in mathematics remains a priority for schools.

**RECOMMENDATION**

22. That the Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services notes the outcomes at the end of early years and primary education on the Isle of Wight.

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