

Item No. 9.	Classification: Open	Date: 20 October 2015	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Response to the Recommendations of the Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee on Narrowing the Achievement Gap	
Ward(s) or groups affected:			
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Victoria Mills, Children and Schools	

FOREWORD – COUNCILLOR VICTORIA MILLS, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS

We are committed to achieving the best start in life for all our children and young people and we want to support every Southwark child to achieve well at school. That support is particularly important for children who are looked after by the local authority, for children whose parents have a low income and for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

I therefore welcome the review of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee into 'Narrowing the Achievement Gap' and its scope, which covers a broad range of the key issues affecting attainment and progress within education.

We will continue to work towards reducing inequalities for the most disadvantaged, so that all Southwark children and young people are able to achieve their full potential.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the cabinet agree the proposed response to the Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee review on Narrowing the Achievement Gap amongst pupils.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee undertook a review to identify how Southwark might narrow the achievement gap amongst pupils. The 'Narrowing the Achievement Gap' report was published June, 2015.
3. The recommendations of the review were presented to cabinet on 21st July 2015, with a request for the relevant cabinet member to respond to the recommendations provided.
4. This report provides a proposed response to the recommendations to be approved by cabinet.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Recommendation 1: The exam and testing regime is changing. When the council updates its council plan to reflect these changes it is recommended that new targets are set using both Attainment 8 and Progress 8 to measure school performance.

5. From 2016 there will be 5 headline measures which will appear in the performance tables:
 - Progress across 8 subjects
 - Attainment across the same 8 subjects
 - Percentage of pupils achieving the threshold in English and mathematics
 - Percentage of pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate
 - Percentage of pupils who went on to sustained education, employment or training during the year after they finished their key stage 4 qualifications.
6. The “bundle of indicators” approach will give a more holistic view of the performance of our secondary schools. We will compare our position nationally and with our London neighbours, but we will not be able to make comparisons with previous GCSE outcomes as the measurement is different.

Recommendation 2: Continue to prioritise finding more local foster & care placements, particularly when it is needed most at year 10 & 11, given the adverse impact moving has on a child’s education.

7. We are currently running a new recruitment campaign for foster carers in the borough. One of the priorities for recruitment will be households who would be willing to take teenagers. In addition to a competitive fostering allowance, foster carers in Southwark will have their council Tax paid by the Council.

Recommendation 3: Ensure the needs of Permanently Placed children are highlighted to schools, alongside the training programme provided by PAC –UK.

8. Schools have a strong track record of identifying and supporting vulnerable children in need of support, including children who have been permanently placed. Schools work closely with Southwark’s Families Matter service so that children who have additional needs can receive the right help quickly. A strong universal service with access to good quality support services is the best way to secure good outcomes for permanently placed children and their families.
9. The Director for Education will discuss the needs of permanently placed children with the Heads Executive and help them identify their training needs in relation to this issue.

Recommendation 4: Link the expertise of the LAC team to local schools with Permanently Placed children.

10. The LAC Education Team is dedicated to improving the educational outcomes for children in care, and is not in a position to support permanently placed children.
11. The Council will continue to support the development of a strong post-adoption support service to ensure that adoptive families can have access to advice and support whenever they need it, which includes help with accessing the best schools.
12. One of the key aims of the London wide adoption agency will be to transform adoption and special guardianship support, ensuring high quality support is available when and where it is needed, particularly therapeutic and mental health services. This will ensure that there is more consistent adopter support across

London with the potential for a more strategic response to raising awareness in schools and delivering improved access to support services.

13. Through the London Adoption Board and the ALDCS, Southwark will be well placed to influence improved service delivery across London along the lines recommended by the Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendation 5: Bring the research of Lambeth Council, and the Southwark Education Community School education researchers insights, on white working class attainment to the attention of local schools through the education department and the Headteachers' Executive.

14. The 0 -19 team will highlight the research of Lambeth by presenting the findings at Headteacher Briefings, and making the research findings available on the Standards Website.
15. In addition, we continue to work with, support and challenge school leaders so that they are able to demonstrate a strong commitment to closing the attainment gap, focus on improving outcomes for white working class and other groups showing significant underachievement, forensically target interventions, and develop robust tracking systems.

Recommendation 6: Assist schools in improving the provision for low income and deprived parents, in recognition of their pivotal role in children's education, particularly in areas where there is a high disparity of wealth. In particular take measures to assist schools engage parents, and improve the provision of parental literacy classes and community education. Take steps to assist families in housing need, especially the needs of displaced children whose families have had to move to access housing.

16. Support and challenge schools to make the best use of use of Pupil Premium funding to improve the academic and wider outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. Encouraging schools to have a strong vision, long term commitment (reflected in systems embedded within the school), good and continued communication of vision across the school and a collaborative approach with parents so that every pupil has the opportunity to succeed.
17. Support and challenge schools to develop stronger parent and carer engagement. Developed strong parent and carer engagement through parent and carer, teacher and pupil discussion of work at 'Termly Learning Conferences'. Pupil engagement in meetings is supported through discussion with their teacher. This is underpinned by close monitoring of pupil progress, rigorous evaluation of interventions and teachers sharing ideas on pupil engagement.
18. Support and challenge schools to consider introduction workshops for parents and children which focused on core skills to promote high aspirations and involved of children and parents working together at home.

Recommendation 7: Promote Bacon's College good practice in providing a whole school approach to wellbeing and use of therapeutic and targeted interventions to address the social, emotional and mental health needs of the most disadvantaged students, particularly to ensure the bottom 20% make good progress.

19. We have aligned Educational Psychologists and Early Help Officers more closely within SEND to pick up non-statutory work where families do not meet EHC plan thresholds.
20. We have also built strong links with Family Support Workers and Education Welfare Officers in Early Help. We offer parenting programmes mainly where children are experiencing behavioural needs, and in support of EHC planning or where a EHC plan not agreed.

Recommendation 8: Improve communication by Social Work teams with schools by ensuring that schools have a consistent link. Look at the deployment of school nurses as an example of good practice – schools praised the simple geographical model and clear communication lines.

21. We are in the process of providing schools with the details of relevant Heads of Services, Practice Group Leads, and MASH named persons so that they can direct their enquiries to the appropriate services.

Recommendation 9: Improve communication between schools, Housing, Probation Services and the Police.

22. A multi-agency meeting was held with schools and partner agencies in February 2015 to discuss Child Sexual Exploitation responses and raised general issues about communication of information, identifying the appropriate channels to raise concern – particularly the importance of using the MASH to ensure a coordinated response.
23. The Youth Offending Service has an Education, Training & Employment Officer who can be contacted by Southwark Schools. We provide these details to the Heads Executive.
24. We have made efforts to deliver prevention advice in secondary schools in order to address misconceptions among young people regarding eligibility for housing. We believe this is important work and aim to continue to build on this work with schools going forward.

Recommendation 10: Invest in further provision of CAMHSs and ensure that there is one consistent CAMHS link person for every school.

25. The refreshed behaviour support strategy will impact on the emotional and behavioural needs of pupils. We have also expanded Summerhouse Southwark Behaviour provision for primary schools, and arranged interim funding for children to receive support for emotional and behavioural needs. All four locality teams have a CAMHS worker who work directly with schools.

Recommendation 11: Ensure that the Local Offer website covers the full range of training and apprenticeships for all young people, particularly young people with special needs, and that the site details all employment support available.

26. The Local Offer has a section dedicated to the provision of information about employment, training and apprenticeships. There is a requirement for the Local Offer to identify training opportunities, supported employment services, apprenticeships, traineeships and supported internships. This includes information about additional support such as the Access to Work fund, teaching

and learning support, job coaching in the workplace and the provision of specialist equipment.

27. Southwark's Information, Advice and Support Team (SIAS) are engaging with providers of apprenticeships, traineeships and supported internships to ensure that the local offer includes a range of options for young people with additional needs from 16-25. The team is working closely with Southwark's Participation, Employment and Training Team, and London wide Apprenticeship and Training providers to ensure that the local offer includes all of the latest opportunities for our young people.
28. The Local Offer includes information on how to apply for opportunities and entry requirements. The IAS Team provide an individual specialist casework service for young people aged 16-25 where necessary. The team support young people with accessing the local offer, considering options, making applications and by providing practical support when necessary.
29. Work continues on the Local Offer to ensure it captures as much information as possible for parents and young people in relation to post school pathways and opportunities.

Recommendation 12: Work with Lewisham Southwark College to improve its provision of quality apprenticeships.

30. The quality of apprenticeship provision at Lewisham Southwark College is below an acceptable level and this is acknowledged by the college senior management team. They have developed an action plan to address the key issues, but this has yet to be reflected in outcomes for students.
31. The council is represented on the Skills Funding Agency monitoring group that is charged with monitoring the progress that the college is making in relation to rectifying the weaknesses identified in the Ofsted report. Progress with apprenticeships is a standing item on the meeting agenda for this group.
32. The council has worked with a number of FE providers to deliver the training aspect of the council scheme ensuring that we are not tied to one location or provider.
33. The council has recently launched its apprenticeship standard which aims to improve the delivery of apprenticeships for Southwark young people, and includes a requirement for quality training for all young people who are signed up to the scheme.

Recommendation 13: The Overview & Scrutiny Committee notes the possible closure of the Lewisham Southwark College Camberwell site and propose the cabinet supports the local campaign to keep this facility open.

34. Southwark Council believes that Lewisham Southwark College's plan to sell the Camberwell site would harm the interests of local young people and older learners.
35. In spite of Council opposition, the college is proceeding with the sale of the Camberwell campus. This will mean that in the past three years the college will

have disposed of over two thirds of the learning space that was previously available for Southwark Learners.

36. The Leader of the Council has formally written to the Commissioner for FE to express the council's opposition to the planned sale. The Leader has also written to the Minister responsible and is awaiting a response to that letter.
37. The council will continue to press for a solution that meets the needs of local people.

Recommendation 14: Improve the diversity of the post 16 year offer for young people by investing in widening the provision at local sixth forms, where possible, and ensure that young people, parents and carers fully understand the range of alternative options and are well supported in transition.

38. Southwark sixth forms have performed very well against other schools in London and nationally. This cannot however offer a full alternative to an effective and high performing FE offer in the borough. All schools are keen to be active partners in the development of a new FE offer in the borough and have written to the FE Commissioner in support of looking for a fresh start.
39. The Participation Education and Training Team track all young people in the borough aged 16-19 to ensure that they are participating in learning. Where a young person is not participating they will work with that young person to ensure that they engage with learning.
40. The Southwark Information and Advice Service help young people with special needs to find learning opportunities that best meet their particular needs.

Recommendation 15: Southwark Council must develop an exemplary further education offer for current and future students of Lewisham Southwark College as a matter of urgency, particularly considering the impact such a poor offer has on local learners. Moves should be made to develop plans to improve the opportunities for local learners focused on defining what a 'good further education offer' looks like by; working with the funding agencies, providers and other key stakeholders to develop this.

41. The council has been working with key partners including schools, local businesses and London South Bank University to develop proposals to transform the post 16 learning landscape in Southwark.
42. A headline proposal was submitted to the Further Education Commissioner as part of his Structure and Prospects Appraisal of Lewisham Southwark College. The paper advocated the break up of the college with a fresh start college being developed in Southwark. The Commissioner's initial response has not been favourable as his view is that colleges need to merge to form bigger institutions in order to survive in the current funding climate.
43. The Council is determined to create a better route into work for people across the borough and will continue to seek a solution that properly meets the needs of students and local businesses.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Narrowing the Achievement Gap report, June 2015 Education and Children's Services scrutiny sub-committee	Southwark Council 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Julie.timbrell@southwark.gov.uk
Link: http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s55619/Appendix%20A%20Scrutiny%20report%20-%20Narrowing%20the%20achievement%20gap.pdf		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Victoria Mills, Children and Schools	
Lead Officer	Merril Haeusler, Director of Education	
Report Author	Dean Thomas, Policy Adviser, Children's and Adults' Services	
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