

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Early Years, Children and Youth Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	29 September 2014	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
TITLE:	'Narrowing The Gap' update	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
Annex 1 – Pupil Premium Wheel of Support		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 To provide an update on the work to ensure all children have equal life chances and to narrow the gap in outcomes for some groups of children.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Early Years, Children and Youth Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

- 2.1 Note the work underway and receive further updates in due course.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 None

4 THE REPORT

What is the issue?

- 4.1 Despite Bath and North East Somerset being a relatively healthy, wealthy, high performing area, we know there are some stark inequalities within our population and that some groups of children and young people have poorer outcomes than others. This includes educational attainment for children and young people on Free School Meals (FSM), those with SEN and children in care. They are also likely to have poorer health and life chances generally. Specifically we know that in 2013 GCSE results there was a 35.9% gap between the proportion of FSM and non-FSM children gaining 5 A*-C including English and Maths. Although our performance for non-FSM is above the

average for England and the South West, our FSM performance is below average, so the gap put us in the bottom three authorities in the South West.

What plans do we have to address this?

- 4.2 Our Children and Young People's Plan states that one of our three key priorities is that all children in Bath and North East Somerset have equal life chances. The Plan sets out a range of objectives and outcomes that we are seeking to achieve over the next 3 years to contribute to this priority. These include, for example, narrowing the attainment gap between looked after children and their peers; increasing the numbers of care leavers in employment, education and training; implementing the SEND Reforms; increasing children's participation, voice and influence; further work on nurture support and attachment awareness.
- 4.3 Ofsted has also seen the FSM gap as a key priority in the South West and has written to secondary schools asking how they are addressing this. School plans, implementation of these and the outcomes achieved for FSM pupils will be a key feature of all Ofsted inspections over the next two to three years and schools which lack credible plans, those that have failed to implement and evaluate effectively and those not showing a significant improvement for these children will find themselves with a lowered Ofsted judgement. From initial feedback nationally it is failure to address the attainment and achievement gap that has driven down school Ofsted judgements either from Outstanding to Good or from Good into Requires Improvement. This is a very significant issue for schools to address both individually and collectively.
- 4.4 Addressing inequalities in children's life chances is a whole system issue not just about Year 6 SATs and Year 11 GCSEs. The Local Authority is one of a range of players within the system that must work together if we are to achieve a change. This will be challenging in the context of financial constraint and reduced capacity.

What progress is being made?

- 4.5 In 2013/14 we set up a Strategy Group with headteachers, senior leaders and representatives from Council services to plan a way forward on the educational attainment gap for FSM. This led to a highly successful Conversation Café where schools and services from across the educational phases met to share what they felt worked well. Included too were the results of discussions with the Pupil Parliaments to ensure that young people's views were considered. Ideas were captured and through a series of further meetings, these ideas were refined into the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) Wheel of Support (attached at Annex 1). What is immediately clear, of course, is that the gap that we are seeking to narrow is a 'whole life' issue and not just about school or about GCSE courses – this just happens to be where we have the most comprehensive data to demonstrate the inequalities that exist for our young people. The Wheel is now a starting point for a support programme where schools and settings can see what strategies and services may help with a particular need. In 2014/15 this will be developed further with a directory of services and activities to increase children and young people's engagement and success at school.

Mini Case study

- 4.6 Peasedown St John Primary School use their PPG money to fund a successful Nurture Group programme with specialist staff. This programme helps to ensure vulnerable children feel settled, valued and included in their schooling and it benefits other children who are not in receipt of PPG due to its inclusive nature. In addition the school uses precision data tracking to identify children's progress and monitor the impact of interventions. The Senior Leadership Team has shared the responsibility for narrowing the gap with all staff and given key managers strategic roles to help implement its plans.

Impact

- 4.7 The nature of the issues, as described above, mean that success will take time to be fully demonstrated by statistics. However, our provisional results for 2014 suggest a positive overall reduction in the FSM gap at GCSE with the majority of schools seeing an improvement in their results.

5 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Extensive consultation was undertaken as part of the development of the Children & Young People's Plan 2014-17.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

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Background papers	
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	