

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Children, Adults, Health & Wellbeing Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	10 th of March 2025	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
TITLE:	Early Years & Education Performance 2023/24 – Final SEB Publication	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
Equalities Impact Assessment		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1** This report provides the Panel with an overview of early-years & school education performance in the academic year 2023-24, including information on the LA's approach to working with the academy sector to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- 1.2** This report's summary of education performance is derived from the council's Strategic Evidence Base (SEB) on educational attainment, which was produced by the council's Business Intelligence team. The SEB can be reviewed by following the link below.

<https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/strategic-evidence/document-library/educational-attainment>

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Panel / Committee is asked to;

- 2.1** Note our pupils' overall positive education performance in B&NES early years settings and schools for the academic year 2023/24.
- 2.2** There has been a slight improvement in education outcomes for Free School Meal (FSM)-eligible children in KS2 during the academic year 23/24, but the gap remains significant.

- 2.3** Be assured that Local Authority Officers continue to collaborate strategically with schools and partners and the DFE Regions Group to improve educational outcomes for all pupils in B&NES. The DFE Regions Group are in attendance today to provide an overview of their role with academies and the work they do to address academy and trust performance.
- 2.4** Please note that the Local Authority remains committed to delivering initiatives aimed at enhancing outcomes for Free School Meal (FSM) pupils. This includes direct collaboration with schools to offer Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and training, support for early years settings, and a partnership with the St John's Foundation to provide additional assistance to schools with greater numbers of FSM pupils
- 2.5** This year, the Local Authority has taken additional steps by conducting extensive research through our Public Health team. This research aims to examine the broader determinants of educational disadvantage in B&NES and develop an action plan for the Local Authority. The results of this research will be presented today.

3 THE REPORT – SUMMARY

- 3.1** Pupils in B&NES attained higher grades than regional and national figures in all stages of education except Key Stage 2 (KS2), where attainment remained slightly lower than national figures for the second year.
- 3.2** In the early years foundation stage (EYFS), the percentage of children reaching a good level of development increased to 72%, higher than regional and national averages.
- 3.3** Key stage 2 performance has not returned to the post-pandemic levels when performance in the combined reading, writing and maths (RWM) was higher than national and regional. This year, the percentage of pupils achieving this measure rose from 58% to 60%, higher than the southwest average of 58% but lower than the national average of 61%
- 3.4** Pupils make good progress between KS2 and Key Stage 4 (KS4), with pupils in B&NES achieving, on average, more progress (around 16% of a grade) in each qualification compared to similar pupils across the country.
- 3.5** Key stage 4 attainment in grades 9 -5 English and Maths and in Attainment 8 is once again higher than regional and national averages. This is to be commended
- 3.6** B&NES A Level results were higher in all measures than regional and national measures
- 3.7** Girls consistently performed better than boys at all key stages. Though the gender gap at KS2 is smaller than the national, this is due to a reduction in the attainment of girls since the end of the pandemic.
- 3.8** Children with SEN support needs and those with an EHCP in KS4 have educational outcomes that are marginally higher than national. In KS2, attainment has generally been in line with or slightly above national; however, this year, it has experienced a slight dip below the national average.

3.9 Attainment in B&NES is lowest in the Black and Other ethnic groups at all stages of education and remains below national levels at KS2 and KS4. Attainment in the Black and other ethnic group cohort was similar to national at EYFS. Whilst numbers in these cohorts are relatively low, this is a trend seen for a number of years, particularly at KS2 and KS4. Attainment in the Black and Other ethnic groups saw notable increases in the EYFS.

3.10 KS4 attainment in the FSM cohort remained broadly in line with national. The attainment gap in B&NES does not widen in secondary education, and their KS4 outcomes align with national for this group.

3.11 Despite a slight improvement in EYFS and KS2 FSM outcomes, attainment within this cohort remains in the bottom quartile compared to all local authorities in England. Attainment is currently ranked 16th lowest at EYFS and 6th lowest at KS2, showing progress from previously being ranked 3rd lowest and the lowest in the country, respectively, in 2022/23. However, the disparity between our area and the national average in terms of the percentage of FSM children meeting the expected standard in KS2 RWM remains substantial, at 33% and 46%, respectively.

3.12 B&NES, as a partner in the structures that govern a highly academised area, remains committed to playing its part in improving outcomes for our most disadvantaged group of children. We continue to fund and deliver projects in hand with the St John's Foundation and with partners, such as Black Families Education Support Group, in the early years and all schools. These are:

- Language for Life – Now rolled out to all early settings in Bath & North East Somerset, providing additional language development support to targeted children. (link to reports)
- Primary Empowerment – Targeted academic and behaviour support with support to the seven schools in B&NES with largest cohorts of FSM Pupils, now in its third year.
- Improving Disadvantaged Education Outcomes Programme – A CPD programme for Disadvantaged leads in all B&NES schools. Now in its second year.
- Race Equality Charter Mark – Supporting schools to foster creative, support, anti-racist school environments.

3.13 Alongside these existing commitments, the council is now looking at a wider approach to improving disadvantaged education outcomes. As previously presented to scrutiny panel, our Public Health team are leading this work and their final report and action plan will be presented today.

4 CLIMATE CHANGE

4.1 This report contains information on academic outcomes in our early years, primary & secondary schools. No climate issues have been identified in the production of this report.

5 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 No other options have been considered for writing this report.

6 CONSULTATION

6.1 This report has been developed with the input and consultation of the Council's Business Intelligence team.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 An equalities impact assessment has been completed and submitted to support this paper. This report reveals several areas where academic outcomes highlight inequalities between different groups of children in Bath & North East Somerset. The evidence in this SEB will continue to be used to strategically inform several work streams to improve inequalities in outcomes and disproportionality in negative outcomes.

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Background papers	https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/strategic-evidence/document-library/educational-attainment
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	