

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Children, Health & Wellbeing Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	Tuesday 15th of June 2021	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
TITLE:	Narrowing the attainment gap	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Please list all the appendices here, clearly indicating any which are exempt and the reasons for exemption Appendix 1 – Language for Life Appendix 2 – Primary Empowerment Programme Appendix 3 – What Works Virtual School Pilot Appendix 4 – Closing the Gap		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 This report provides an update on activity to narrow the attainment gap of disadvantaged (pupil premium/FSM) pupils, included in the Education Updates report presented to Policy Development and Scrutiny (PDS) in November 2021. Covid 19 and the resulting school closures have dramatically changed the work context to support this cohort of children and young people, both in the data available to measure educational outcomes and in the delivery of projects. It is considered that now more than ever, this group of children and young people will need increased support and collaborative work to help them achieve as well as their peers

2 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 This report seeks to advise and reassure the panel that officers within the LA, alongside partners and schools, continue to work on projects and strategies to improve the educational outcomes of disadvantaged children and young people in B&NES. Whilst undoubtedly the pandemic will have impacted the education outcomes of all children and young people, recovering from Covid 19 provides opportunities to bring the work to support disadvantaged pupils into focus and

collaborate with partners. Examples of this work and emerging collaborations are provided in this report.

3 THE REPORT.

- 3.1 To support this report, members of the B&NES Schools Standards Board have shared early School and Trust level summaries of the impact of Covid 19 on pupils in B&NES. These summaries will be based on Teacher assessment of pupils when they have returned to schools.
- 3.2 There are common themes in these summaries. Pupils in the younger years, especially reception, year one and year two, are furthest away from where we would typically expect them to be. Trust leaders have also indicated that the impact on progress has been more significant for some disadvantaged pupils. Broadly, upper KS2 pupils are being reported as being on track to attain their targets set at the start of the academic year, though a drop in those reaching the higher standards has been reported. Pupil writing, alongside phonics, was considered the most significant challenge to deliver remotely and this is being reflected in the 'lost ground' compared to the other core subjects.
- 3.3 In Key Stage 3 and 4, schools report no discernible impact on progress, with indicators being slightly below where they had been in previous years. However, there is a general reporting of deterioration in behaviour in these year groups, particularly in year 7.
- 3.4 National studies do mirror some of this local intelligence. The Juniper Education report on the impact of Covid 19 has examined teacher assessments in more than 6000 primary schools. The report concludes that the number of children in Years 2 to 6 who were achieving at or above the standard expected for their age dropped by approximately one fifth between autumn 2019 and summer 2020. Additionally, fewer disadvantaged children had returned to working at expected levels than non-disadvantaged children after being back in school in autumn 2020.
- 3.5 PDS Panel is advised that due to Covid 19, examinations once again have been cancelled in primary schools and secondary examinations have been replaced by Teacher Assessed Grades (TAG's). This will again provide a challenge to assessing the attainment gap by using examination data. Locally we will need to find a consistent methodology of understanding the impact of Covid on our disadvantaged pupil cohort.
- 3.6 To tackle the lack of comparable area-wide examination data and to find a way to measure the progress of these young people, the B&NES School Standards Board has agreed to a project using the Education Endowment Foundations Families of Schools data. This project aims to engage all schools in B&NES to identify, support and track the progress of all pupil premium children over a period from September 2020 – September 2021. Further detail about this project is found in the Schools Standards Board update in the report section of this paper and the appendices.
- 3.7 Despite the additional challenges created by Covid 19, there is no reason to believe that the context of the gap in B&NES has not changed. The attainment gap in B&NES can be closed by improved results in specific locations in B&NES and by targeting support in the early years and at particular schools. As advised in the last report, Officers in the LA have been working alongside the St. Johns

Foundation to deliver strategies to target Early Years outcomes in specific locations and provide additional support to Primary Schools with the largest disadvantaged children population. This report provides further detail on these projects, the work of the B&NES Standards Board, post-Covid 19 support from the DFE to all schools and funding from the What Works Foundation to our Virtual School.

The St Johns Foundation Fund & Virtual School Pilot

3.10 There are two projects supported by the St. Johns Foundation that are targeted at improving the educational outcomes of disadvantaged children through the combined interventions of the St John's Foundation, early years settings, schools, the Local Authority and key partners from health and the voluntary sector. These two projects are:

- The Language for Life Project
- The Primary Empowerment Project

Detailed information on these projects are included in Appendix 1 & 2

As advised in the last paper to PDS in November 2020, the Virtual School has also been awarded funding from the What Works Foundation to expand the schools remit to support children in need and children on child protection plans. An update on this work is provided in Appendix 3.

B&NES Schools Standards Board

3.11 Schools within B&NES continue to liaise and communicate over Educational Standards through the Schools Standards Board. The Board continues to be chaired by the Local Authority and attended by the Regional Schools Commissioners office. Alongside addressing topics such as race equality, the Board is in the process of setting up a pilot project to target improvements in the disadvantaged gap across all schools in B&NES. Using research from the Education Endowment Foundation, it is proposed that the project will start in B&NES schools in September 2021.

A briefing of this project is attached in Appendix 4.

Department For Education Post Covid 19 Support

Catch up funding

3.12 All schools in B&NES have been provided with additional funding to target pupils with catch up education activities. This funding has also been supported by the DFE's role out of the National Tutoring Programme. This programme provides a range of accredited organisations that schools can purchase support from using catch-up funding.

Summer Schools

3.13 Secondary schools are also being encouraged to offer Summer School provision, specifically at the upcoming year seven cohort. Many of our schools in B&NES report that they are looking to make these arrangements for pupils in B&NES. Though mainly academic in outlook, the summer schools will also provide some

enrichment activities. More information on the summer school programmes can be found below

[Summer schools programme - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Holiday Activity Fund

3.14 The Department for Education (DfE) provides funding to local authorities to coordinate a programme that provides healthy food and enriching activities to eligible children during the 2021 Easter, Summer and Christmas Holidays. This is known as the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme. These activities will be targeted at children eligible for free school meals. Locally, the B&NES Public Health team is leading the scheme's implementation. Published information on this DFE fund can be found here-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/holiday-activities-and-food-programme/holiday-activities-and-food-programme-2021>

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 The Local Authority has a broad set of statutory responsibilities to ensure that it is able to deliver education support in a number of areas for all schools around vulnerable young people (SEND, Children Missing Education), supporting maintained schools (School Improvement services) and business functions that support all schools (Admissions and Transport)

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

5.1 This report is not requesting any resources or advising of any resourcing changes

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.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 An EIA has not been completed for this report as this is an information providing paper. However, the reporting Director needs to consider equalities issues within the contents of these reports and how an EIA could add additional value to the content and recommendations

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

8.1 As this is an information only report and no decisions are being made over any changes in service delivery, it is considered that the recommendations in this paper will not adversely impact on climate change or the councils position of being pro-active on matters that affect climate change.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 None

10 CONSULTATION

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10.1 No additional consultation has outside of the Service area has been completed for this information report.

Contact person	Chris Wilford – Director Education, Inclusion & Children's Safeguarding
Background papers	<i>Appendix 1,2,3 & 4</i>
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	

APPENDIX 1



LANGUAGE FOR LIFE
MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

1. The background of the project and why it is needed

*"In our country today, where you start still too often determines where you finish"
Rt Hon Justine Greening, Unlocking Talent Fulfilling Potential, A plan for improving social mobility through education*

In Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) we have a wide and persistent attainment gap between the educational outcomes for children in receipt of Free School Meals (Pupil Premium) and their peers. Outcomes for this cohort in B&NES are amongst the lowest of all Local Authorities in England. This pattern continues from the early years through to GCSE.

Despite significant work over the years, by many services working with children and families pre-birth to 5 years, this pattern is proving difficult to shift. In partnership with St John's Foundation, B&NES Early Years Service and Virgin Care's Speech Language and Communication Therapies plan a refreshed, area specific, multiagency early years approach.

The focus of this work will be the areas where the patterns of achievement for children in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) are consistently poorer than that of their peers. The term 'school readiness' links to the Good Level of Development (GLD) measure at the end of the Reception year. Children need to reach at least the expected level in 12/17 Early Learning Goals to attain this measure. In B&NES 2019, only 46% of children in receipt of FSM achieved the GLD compared to 78% of all other children. Poorer outcomes in Reading and Writing particularly impact on the GLD and these rest upon strong foundations in speech, language and communication. National and local evidence shows that this pattern of underachievement is then highly likely to be set through all key stages.

Nationally, 55% of children from deprived backgrounds achieve all their learning goals at five compared to 73% of other children. That is why, in July 2018, the Secretary of State set out his ambition to halve this figure by 2028. Achieving this ambition will mean supporting parents to help their child's early language development, by building a coalition across society.

Our focus on communication and language is supported by recent research into five Local Authorities that have been successful in reducing the word gap between disadvantaged children and their peers (Closing the word gap: learning from five areas who have gained ground. Jean Gross CBE June 2020)

2. Key partners in the project



The multiagency project delivery will be led by the EYFS Service and the Speech and Language Therapy Service in partnership with St John's Foundation, and an external evaluation partner for the St John's Foundation Fund, ImpactEd.

2. A summary of the overall project and timescales

- Currently in the definition stage, the 2.5 year project will be focussed on two key areas, SW Bath and South Keynsham.
- It will link to the six of the seven infant/primary schools previously identified for a St John's Foundation funded Primary Empowerment Programme: Twerton Infants' and St Michael's Junior, Roundhill Primary, St Martin's Garden Primary, St Keyna Primary and Castle Primary. These schools have significant numbers of children in receipt of FSM and outcomes for some children are persistently low.
- St John's Foundation will fund a dedicated full-time early years speech and language therapist; purchase the Wellcomm early language toolkit for each setting and support for staffing backfill for 29 early years settings across the area and contribute to central management time.
- Nurseries, preschools and childminders that annually feed a significant proportion of their cohort into the six Primary Empowerment Programme schools, will be invited to join the project. This will embed the resources where they are most needed and enable the creation of two learning communities of settings.

4. Tool and evidence base

The **Wellcomm Communications and Language Toolkit** is an evidence based assessment and intervention programme designed for use by early years practitioners with no additional specialist skills needed. It operates a simple traffic light system which bands children into three categories: Green – no additional intervention needed, Amber – extra support and intervention needed within the setting, Red- extra support and intervention needed within the setting but referral to specialist services for further assessment recommended.

After assessment there are resources available so that immediate interventions can be put in place. These are a collection of play based activities known to be effective in meeting Speech, Language and Communication needs.

Regular screening will monitor progress and number of children who move up the bands can be used to measure effectiveness of interventions.

5. Performance Indicators

What are the desired outcomes for the project?

1	2	3	4	5
To increase the percentage of children achieving the Communication and Language Early Learning Goals in the five identified infant or primary schools.	To engage a total of 20 EYs group-based and 9 Childminder settings across the project areas that feed their children into the identified schools	To strengthen early identification of needs and support	To improve confidence and awareness in parents/carers with children with speech, language and communication needs, who find it difficult to engage with mainstream services, in strategies and activities to support their child's needs	To upskill the early years workforce in key geographical locations in the LA

► Add link



6. Roles and responsibilities of project partners

Roles and Responsibilities

St Johns	Virgin Care	B&NES	EY Settings	Impacted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Project Sponsor ➢ Funding the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Management of S&L Therapist ➢ Full-time S&L Therapist ➢ Training for EY Settings ➢ Collection of Wellcomm data ➢ Modelling interventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Managing the Project ➢ Engage identified EY settings ➢ Coach and mentor practitioners ➢ Signpost to other services as necessary ➢ Work alongside S&L Therapist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Attend training ➢ Implement the Wellcomm toolkit ➢ Identify children & provide data ➢ Engage families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ External evaluator



7. Offer/ method:

- Roll out of one evidence based early language and communication tool by the Speech & Language Therapy (S<) service, to be embedded in all year groups in early years settings and used in transition to school.
- Use of the Early Years Hub as a multiagency point of information and communications for early years settings on this project
- Mentor and support all feeder early years settings through support from the EY Service.
- Build network of skilled sector communication leads to support ongoing sustainability.
- Build locality connections between settings and services to support transitions and regular clusters
- Phased roll out: learning from this pilot may be transferred to subsequent roll out phases in B&NES.

8. Launch

The partners involved will launch the information about this project in a timely and coordinated way through their separate channels.

The timescale for planning is tight and the S< joins the planning team on May 1st. Settings will be engaged in the coming months but have not yet been contacted so this information is currently not to be shared externally.

The launch is provisionally planned for July 6th and interested councillors are welcome to attend.

For further information please contact Julie Eden Early years Advisor 01225 394486

Appendix 2.



ST JOHN'S FOUNDATION EST. 1174

Foundation Fund – Primary Empowerment Programme

Programme Brief

St John's Foundation

In February 2020 St John's launched a ten-year strategy focused on narrowing the Attainment Gap for Key Stage 2 children living in Bath and North East Somerset. Our manifesto states our funding will be directed into the following areas:

1. Nutritious food everyday
2. A Safe place outside of school
3. Professional behavioural support
4. Professional emotional support
5. Additional support with foundational reading
6. Additional support with foundational writing
7. Additional support with foundational oracy
8. Additional support with foundational mathematics

Primary Empowerment Programme Overview

Since the launch, notwithstanding the current pandemic, we started to engage with the seven primary schools in Bath and North East Somerset that have the highest number of lowest performing children. These schools represent c. 40% of the total Primary school PP population in B&NES, therefore, it was agreed working with these schools was a good place to start in addressing the attainment gap. The schools are:

	On Role Children	Pupil Premium
Castle Primary School, Keynsham	260	115
Roundhill Primary School, Southdown, Bath	250	120
St Keyna Primary School, Keynsham	236	74
St Martin's Garden Primary School, Odd Down, Bath	189	83
St Mary's School, Writhlington	142	45
St Michael's Junior Church School, Twerton, Bath	141	95
Twerton Infants School, Twerton Bath	130	76

The Head Teachers of these schools and their respective Multi-Academy Trust Chief Executives have all supported St John's focus to fund the additional support their disadvantaged children require within their schools. The Head Teachers' have been honest and worked with us to help us understand the pressures they are facing, which in turn has an impact on the children.

In December 2020 three clear options for the delivery of the Primary Empowerment Programme were presented to St John's Foundation Board of Trustees. These options were:

1. To match fund the current pupil premium each school is receiving
2. To identify delivery partners within the manifesto areas (No. 3 – 8)
3. To identify delivery partners and provide a cash uplift (50% of received pupil premium)

The Board unanimously agreed on option 2. The Trustees felt this was aligned with our manifesto and would provide assurance against St John's strategic direction.

Note: An Evaluation Partner (ImpactED) was appointed in December to ensure after the Board had agreed their decision, we were in the position to start work on building a framework and system to evaluate all aspects of the Foundation Fund and how together they deliver the vision of St John's strategy. The Foundation Fund encompasses:

- **Early Years Pilot Programme**
Language for Life, supporting speech and language development in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- **Nutritious food everyday**
- **A Safe place outside of school**
- **Primary Empowerment Programme**
- **Crisis Fund**

Primary Empowerment Programme latest

We have now received 36 applications from national and local organisations wanting to work with our seven schools. The St John's team and headteachers will now go through a selection process deciding which of these organisations will become our 'delivery partners' and support our schools against our manifesto areas.

The partners will be chosen by the end of May providing the summer term for the partners to carry out the relevant needs based assessments with the schools for delivery to start from September 2021.

The partners will be contracted to work with the schools for three years (subject to yearly reporting requirements and progress made) with our evaluation partner ImpactEd monitoring their work.

The aim is to expand this work beyond our seven schools, by using this pilot programme to understand what is most effective in supporting our schools and children.

APPENDIX 3

Virtual School – What Works Foundation Pilot

During the first lockdown in April 2020, the Virtual School temporarily extended their role to offer additional support for all children on CP and CIN plans. It was clear during this time that the children in the authority who were most vulnerable were those who sit just below the 'coming into care' criteria. The Virtual school worked closely alongside social care teams to first identify those who were most vulnerable. Alongside the risk assessments that schools completed, social care teams RAG rated all the children regarding their concerns around education. This information was all pulled together in a 'vulnerable children report'. This report enabled the local authority to identify which children on an individual level were in education and prioritise which children and schools needed additional support. The Virtual school took on the 100 children that were RAG rated as red onto their caseload for the six weeks of lockdown. Working alongside schools and social care, we offered support and guidance to get as many of this vulnerable cohort back into education. By the end of term 6, 88% of this identified cohort were back into education.

As an outcome of this work in August 2020, the Virtual School submitted a successful funding bid to support the continued expansion of the virtual school to the What Works for Children's Social care organisation. The aim is to put an advisory teacher in place to work alongside the social care teams to raise academic achievement for the most vulnerable children on CO and CIN plans. The pilot group consists of 70 children. The pilot mirrors the work that we do with CLA by putting bespoke education plans in place to reduce exclusions and raise attendance and academic progress. The funding enables each child to access £1000 to allow these plans to be delivered in school and access to additional EP support.

The pilot project has now been running for seven months. During the second national lockdown, the addition of the advisory teachers meant that all children on the project were closely monitored weekly to ensure that they were either accessing a school place or accessing online education. Our 'interim report' of the project in April shows the following benefits:

- Despite a national lockdown, average attendance increased in all key stages
- 55% (37 pupils) showed a green RAG rating impact of the intervention.
- For this term, 12% are making above expected progress and 52% of pupils are making expected progress.
- 16 pupils (24%) have shown an increase in academic attainment
- 14 pupils (21%) have increased their engagement with school or shown an increase in positive self-esteem
- For two pupils (3%), schools have reported a significant decrease in behaviour concerns

A full report of the impact of the pilot project will be available in July.

APPENDIX 4

Schools Standards Board Narrowing the Gap Project 2020 / 2021 – PDS Briefing

As you will all be very aware, Bath and North East Somerset Council has some of the highest outcomes in the South West. However, at all key stages the gap in performance of our pupils receiving Pupil Premium Funding is significantly larger than the national average. This has been an issue that has not improved over a number of years.

This year we would like to pilot a simple project that utilises Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) findings across as many schools and academies as possible within our Local Authority. We hope that every Multi Academy Trust, Single Academy Trust and Local Authority Maintained School will nominate a senior member of staff to lead this project.

The project is built around the Families of Schools data base used by EEF to calculate the average attainment for Disadvantaged Pupils in Reading, Writing and Mathematics Expected + at the end of KS2 and Attainment 8 at the end of KS4. The link to this information is below.

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/new-eef-research-points-way-to-closing-disadvantage-gap-at-primary/#:~:text=New%20EEF%20research%20points%20way%20to%20closing%20disadvantage,the%20attainment%20gap%20in%20reading%2C%20writing%20and%20maths.>

Whilst we know that attainment is not always the most useful metric to judge pupil achievement, it is at the very least a simple measure that can be used during these difficult times where progress calculations are not being produced nationally.

We are asking all schools and academies to follow the process below:

- 1) Identify their family of school's data set.
- 2) Study the set of data that highlights attainment of disadvantaged pupils and note where they sit in relation to the average for their family of schools.
- 3) Calculate the number of disadvantaged pupils in Y6 or Y11 that need to attain the identified standard to reach the 2019 Family of School average for your setting.
- 4) Identify, at an individual school or MAT level, what can be put in place for the identified pupils to make the progress required. You may wish to identify schools within your family data set that are achieving high levels of attainment with disadvantaged pupils and investigate the practice utilised by these schools. It should be emphasised that we have many school within Bath and North East Somerset that perform strongly within their Family of Schools.
- 5) We would then hold a meeting with the designated leads to co-construct reporting formats, share best practice etc so that we are able to monitor progress and evaluate impact.

This project has been chosen as it sets realistic aims, is grounded in what is actually happening in schools that are very similar and provides robust data to measure our performance against. The EEF calculated that if schools could match the average for their family of schools, it would result in a 38% closing of the gap in primaries and 6% in secondaries.

What is clear in our discussions to date, is that leadership from the MAT CEO and school Headteacher are paramount to success when improving the outcomes for disadvantaged

pupils. CEOs and Headteachers that look at the detail of pupil performance and the impact of provision are generally seeing outcomes for disadvantage pupils improve more rapidly.