

**AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET**

**Name of Committee** Cabinet

**Date of Committee** 14 April 2011

**Report Title** Educational Attainment of Children in Warwickshire

**Summary** This report advises the Cabinet of the recommendations of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee following their scrutiny of the educational attainment of children in Warwickshire.

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**Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework?** No.

**Background papers** Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 2 February 2011

**CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-** Details to be specified

- Other Committees  Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 February 2011
- Local Member(s)  N/A
- Other Elected Members  Councillor Tandy, Councillor Balaam, Councillor Ross.....
- Cabinet Member  Councillor Heather Timms
- Chief Executive  .....
- Legal  Jane Pollard
- Finance
- Other Strategic Directors  David Carter, Marion Davis
- District Councils  .....

- Health Authority  .....
- Police  .....
- Other Bodies/Individuals  .....

**FINAL DECISION YES**

**SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:**

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee  .....
- To Council  .....
- To Cabinet  .....
- To an O & S Committee  .....
- To an Area Committee  .....
- Further Consultation  .....

**Cabinet - 14 April 2011.**

**Educational Attainment in Warwickshire**

**Report of the Chair of Children and Young People  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Recommendation**

That Cabinet

1. Makes representation to Government about the prescriptive nature of the English Baccalaureate.
2. Investigates what further measures could be taken as a Local Authority to ensure that the differences in attainment of children and young people in receipt of Free School Meals or with Special Educational Needs are addressed.
3. Reviews the actions taken to ensure that those parents who are eligible for Free School Meals apply.
4. Takes action to address the issues related to “narrowing the gaps” in performance for all groups of children across the county.

1 The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2010 considered the educational attainment of children in Warwickshire.

2 The Committee would like to acknowledge that overall the educational attainment of children in Warwickshire is good and better than the national average. However underlying this are some key issues which still need to be addressed.

**Comparative Performance of Vulnerable Children**

3 The difference in attainment levels in respect of children and young people in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) or with Special Educational Needs (SEN) remains a matter of significant concern.

4 Whilst progress of non FSM pupils at Key Stage 2 English and Maths Level 4 and above has risen by 1% year on year for the last 5 years (now at 80%) the

progress of FSM pupils has flat-lined at 57% for the last 3 years leaving a gap of some 23%. An already significant gap is now widening at an early stage with obvious implications for performance at Key Stage 4.

- 5 There is a significant gap at Key Stage 4 in pupils achieving five or more grades A to C with non FSM pupils at 60% and FSM pupils at 27%. This is a low rate of achievement and significant gap of 33%. Although the progress of FSM pupils has improved the gap has not been narrowed.
- 6 The use of FSM as a category is a crude tool in the absence of any other more appropriate indicator and it is recognised that not all those who are eligible are registered. However it does flag that a significant proportion of vulnerable pupils are not achieving as well as they could. There was some discussion about areas of deprivation where results had been good and it was noted that the latest analysis showed that any child could do well with good teaching, good support from home and good application. Children who were economically deprived were not necessarily culturally deprived and there needed to be balance to all aspects of children's lives.
- 7 At Key Stage 2 Maths and English Level 4 or above the gap between non SEN and SEN remains around the 48-51% over the last 3 years. Similarly the gap at Key Stage 4 in achieving five or more Grades A to C including English and Maths remains static at 46%.
- 8 These issues may be reflecting a national picture but it is also a Warwickshire issue which needs to be addressed.

### **The English Baccalaureate**

- 9 The prescriptive nature of the English Baccalaureate. Local authorities have not yet received a steer from central government on the Baccalaureate although it appears that the government is pushing this measure of attainment given its appearance in the performance tables. The Baccalaureate currently requires
  - i. English
  - ii. Mathematics
  - iii. Two sciences
  - iv. Geography or history
  - v. Foreign language
10. Provisional figures for English Baccalaureate 2010 in Warwickshire show 17% of Warwickshire pupils overall meeting this measure. In terms of individual school performance the % of eligible pupils ranges from 87% to 51% for Grammar schools and other schools between 38% to 0%. When compared to the general performance of all schools in relation to 5A to C GCSE qualification it seems the performance figures reflect the fact that options were chosen two years before the narrow scope of the Baccalaureate was known. Results that included the Baccalaureate were lower in North Warwickshire and Nuneaton and Bedworth, where more vocational options were chosen.

11. The Committee would urge the Cabinet to lobby central government to widen the scope of the humanities selection within the Baccalaureate to include other subjects such philosophy, geology, art, drama, sociology etc.
12. The Committee understands that Warwickshire SACRE has previously recommended to the DfE that Religious Education (RE) should be included under the Humanities subjects, and this has been rebuffed on the basis that RE was already a compulsory subject for secondary schools.

JUNE TANDY  
Chair of Children and Young  
People Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee

Shire Hall  
Warwick

March 2011