

Open Report on behalf of Debbie Barnes, Executive Director of Children's Services

Report to:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date:	20 January 2017
Subject:	School Performance Working Group – Key Stage 4 Disadvantaged and Looked after Children

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to summarise the work of the Key Stage 4 School Performance Working Group and to

- provide an overview of the effective practices currently operating in Lincolnshire;
- provide an overview of effective practices operating beyond Lincolnshire; and
- provide recommendations to further promote and champion improved educational outcomes for children living with disadvantage and Looked After Children at Key Stage 4.

Actions Required:

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is invited to comment on the contents of the report and agree the 13 recommendations for further work to promote the outcomes for all pupils including those experiencing disadvantage and Looked After Children at Key Stage Four.

1. Background

The School Performance Working Group was established in June 2016 to explore current practice and potential mechanisms for further improving the educational outcomes for children experiencing disadvantage. In September 2016, this focus was extended to include Looked After Children interventions.

The Working Group consisted of Councillors D Brailsford, Mrs J Brockway, S R Dodds, J D Hough, Mrs H N J Powell and Mrs L A Rollings. The remit for the School Performance Working Group was:

1. To review the Key Stage 4 performance in Lincolnshire and the support provided to schools to improve their Key Stage 4 performance.

2. To review the educational attainment and progress of Looked After Children in Lincolnshire at Key Stage Four and the support provided to Looked After Children to assist them in their learning.
3. To identify best practice at other councils for improving Key Stage 4 performance of all pupils and Looked After Children.
4. To examine what alternative learning methods and support could be used in schools to help raise the attainment levels for all pupils and Looked After Children at Key Stage 4.
5. To report back to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee at the January 2017 meeting.

The initial meeting of the Working Group, supported by Council officers, took place on 14th June 2016, with the remit being agreed on 19th September 2016. Further meetings and visits took place on 5th October 2016, 22nd November 2016 and 5th January 2017. At each meeting, further research and findings were discussed to identify the most appropriate developments in Lincolnshire to improve educational outcomes for those considered to experience disadvantage and for those who are Looked After. The reason for this focus is that nationally and locally, it is acknowledged that there is a gap in educational achievement for those pupils experiencing disadvantage when compared against their peers, with Looked after Children experiencing some of the worst educational outcomes of all pupils. Addressing this and reducing this gap is a national and a local priority and therefore, the nature of school improvement interventions delivered must focus on how schools can effectively work with disadvantaged children to narrow this gap.

Current context of School Improvement in Lincolnshire

At the heart of Lincolnshire's education improvement strategy (Learn and Achieve) is a commitment to work collaboratively with maintained schools and academies within the sector, to secure:

- the best possible levels of attainment and progress,
- outstanding leadership including effective governance,
- safety, fairness and equity for all pupils and staff,
- value for money,
- the capacity for continuous improvement within a rigorous self-improving system.

We have only recently revised this strategy to embrace collaborative working within a sector led model for school improvement, with the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership (LLP) being launched last year. Through the LLP, all schools are expected to undertake a peer review which outlines strengths and areas for development, with schools working in collaboration to learn from and with each other. The establishment of Teaching Schools also provide an important sector led model of professional development and school improvement. This sector led approach to school improvement provides the framework on which any recommendations to improve practice must be channelled.

Lincolnshire's approach to school improvement is quite unique in that it has a rapidly developing sector led system of improvement, whereby the resources are

held within schools/academies and they work together, as outlined above, to support and improve each other. Confidence is placed with the sector to strive for improvement, with schools working in partnership with the Local Authority through the LLP. Other authorities have mainly taken one of two approaches to school improvement over the past few years; firstly, many Local Authorities disbanded all activity thereby leaving schools to fend for themselves. The second model has been to develop or maintain a fully traded service of consultants to sell out to schools.

The context of Lincolnshire meant that we had an opportunity to do something different to ensure an effective system was in place to drive improvement within all our schools. Working with the sector, the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership has been established and has formally taken the lead in strategic planning from September 2016 with a view of maintaining connectivity in an ever changing landscape. The Lincolnshire Learning Partnership is unique and enables all schools and academies to thrive, using the skills within the sector via Teaching Schools, Multi Academy Trusts, commercial school improvement, and individual schools. Lincolnshire County Council provides support and challenge to the system through the use of four Locality Leads to ensure quality of provision and appropriate action is taken by the school or academy to improve. Locality Leads engage with schools that are at risk and pursue improvement through regular monitoring and challenge meetings. Predominantly, the resource in the system is within the sector and our function is to ensure connections between effective practices are shared and enhanced across the districts and county.

Mechanisms to support the achievement of Looked After Children are led by Lincolnshire County Council's Virtual School which is a team of teachers and dedicated education professionals who work to support the education of Lincolnshire's Looked After Children although our children also remain the responsibility of the school at which they are enrolled. As a 'Corporate Parent' for Looked After Children, the role of the Virtual School is to champion the educational needs of our young people. This involves monitoring progress and attendance, supporting our young people and professionals around them, quality assuring personal education plans, planning targeted interventions and celebrating achievements. The Virtual School works with schools, carers, social workers, health professionals and education professionals, to help children achieve their full potential. It offers practical support for children, young people and their carers throughout their education. The Virtual School will challenge and offer support to young people and professionals to ensure that the best possible progress is made by the young person, in the best possible educational placement. In addition, the Locality Leads challenge and support schools regarding their performance in relation to Looked After Children. We are aspirational for standards of educational provision for our Looked After Children to be good or better (as judged by Ofsted). Further tuition and additional learning experiences should add value to their learning based on the knowledge and expertise in the school at which they attend. In September 2016 83% of our young people in care attended schools graded good or better by Ofsted, and the Virtual School ensures that no child is placed inappropriately in a school graded less than good.

It is important to highlight that this report was written against an ever changing background of accountability and responsibility resting increasingly with schools.

Key Stage 4 performance in Lincolnshire and complicating factors

There are 46,452 secondary aged pupils in Lincolnshire, with approximately 6500 in Year 11 of which 1600 are deemed to be disadvantaged, with outcomes for disadvantaged pupils being below the national average in Lincolnshire. In 2016, 31% of disadvantaged children achieved 5 A*-C including English and Maths compared to 63% for non-disadvantaged pupils. The gap is defined as the difference between the 31% and the 63% which means that Lincolnshire has a gap of 32% between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers. This is of concern and is a priority for the Local Authority and schools.

Attainment and progress at Key Stage 4 for our Lincolnshire Looked After Children has been in line with the average for Looked After Children nationally over the last 4 years (2011-2015). In 2016, 51 students (in care 12 months) were eligible to sit GCSEs. The national average for Children in Care achieving 5 good A*- C grades (including English and Maths) has remained stubbornly low at around 15% (achieving 5 A*-C GCSE's including English and Maths) when compared to the performance of all other children nationally.

Children experiencing disadvantage are eligible for Pupil Premium funding which is to enable further support to be given to address under achievement, recognising the gap between them and their peers. Pupil Premium funding is targeted at those children who are eligible for Free School Meals.

In the 2016 to 2017 financial year, schools will receive the following funding for each child registered as eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years:

- £1,320 for pupils in reception year to year 6
- £935 for pupils in year 7 to year 11

Schools will also receive £1,900 for each pupil identified in the spring school census as having left local authority care because of one of the following:

- adoption
- a special guardianship order
- a child arrangements order
- a residence order

If a pupil has been registered as eligible for free school meals and has also left local authority care for any of the reasons above, they will attract the £1,900 rate.

There are many complicating variables which impact upon performance and this section will highlight a number of them.

Lincolnshire is in the 40th percentile levels of disadvantage. This means it is in the upper half compared nationally (1st percentile being the most disadvantaged). It is perhaps not a surprise to confirm that local authorities with lower levels of

disadvantage experience higher educational achievement, although this is not the case in all circumstances. Educational outcomes in London tend to be higher, even in areas of relative disadvantage, but this highlights a further compounding issue, that of school funding per pupil.

Lincolnshire is funded less per pupil than many other Local Authorities and it is perhaps not surprising to note that some authorities, who have better educational outcomes than Lincolnshire (many top performing areas are based in London), are funded at a higher per pupil rate. The government are committed to addressing this through the Fairer Funding Formula, due to be introduced in a few years' time. Lincolnshire County Council has actively campaigned for fairer funding.

A further issue relates to the recruitment and retention of skilled staff across the County which varies at district level and presents a number of challenges. It is particularly difficult to attract high quality skilled practitioners to areas of high deprivation such as East Lindsey. The spread of disadvantaged learners across individual schools is irregular with some schools having over 50% disadvantaged learners within one school and others having much smaller numbers. Ensuring the most disadvantaged children experience the best teaching is highly complex and not simple to achieve.

Support provided to Schools to improve their Key Stage 4 performance.

Our duty as a Local Authority is to champion outcomes for all learners so that they are well prepared for the world of work and adulthood. In June 2016 the East Midlands Challenge identified that the region needed to improve the outcomes of disadvantaged learners specifically. As a result a range of conferences, sharing best practice events, and joint working through the Teaching Schools has evolved. In addition, from September 2016 school inspections have focused on the progress and achievements of disadvantaged pupils, with the framework expecting inspectors to form a judgement on the effectiveness of the school in supporting disadvantaged pupils to progress and achieve. Ofsted also expect schools to publish how they use the pupil premium funding with an expectation that detailed plans are published on line and include:

- the number of eligible pupils
- what their needs are
- what support will be delivered
- how impact will be measured and when
- a review of the impact of the intervention delivered

The Education Team have communicated this to all settings and offered support on request to ensure compliance is maintained. Locality Leads also check websites and provision based upon these plans. Many schools also request a formal independent review of the use of their pupil premium.

In Lincolnshire, there is a lot to be proud of and the following summarises what is already working well:

- All schools are aware of disadvantaged pupils and take ownership for the planning of interventions and further support through the use of Pupil Premium funding.
- Partnerships and clusters of schools, enabled by the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership, are supporting one another in sourcing relevant staff for additional tutoring. However, this is not consistent across the county and there is a general teacher recruitment issue in some districts. Academies are using alternative strategies to attract and employ teachers and Lincolnshire is supporting school based teacher training via the Teaching Schools.
- Lincolnshire schools are becoming more confident in utilising their best teachers to target disadvantaged pupils, but this does have the impact of needing to replace class teachers from a limited pool of potential candidates.
- Peer reviews are focusing on disadvantaged pupils and the provision being made for them. Schools are aware of needing to narrow the gap and actively focusing on this.
- Schools are working collaboratively on school improvement activities to strengthen provision and develop alternative models to engage and motivate learners through sharing expertise, knowledge and resources.
- Lincolnshire County Council Locality Leads maintain oversight and challenge with schools, making an offer to academies, to ensure they are taking the correct steps to support and improve outcomes for learners, particularly disadvantaged.
- The four Lincolnshire County Council Locality Leads work with schools, clusters and networks. They facilitate school improvement activities with the Teaching Schools and provide insight to the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership of schools' effectiveness.
- Many schools and academies are now focusing more on mental health and well-being through professional development and training.
- Schools across Lincolnshire keenly recognise the importance of mental well-being and as a consequence of this are instilling a learning culture based upon positive behavioural expectations, a can do approach to challenge within learning (growth mind-set), identifying individual needs of learners and helping children to recognise how they learn best (metacognition).
- Research is being promoted nationally and the Department for Education has earmarked significant funding to 11 research schools for the country as a whole. Lincolnshire has one called the Kyra Research School which is part of the Kyra Teaching School Alliance based in Lincoln and West Lindsey. They have a significant group of schools, approximately 50, which they regularly work with providing professional development. This strand of work will enable focused research activity to take place in clusters, districts, and across Lincolnshire to benefit Lincolnshire children. They are already in discussions with Lincolnshire County Council/Lincolnshire Learning Partnership regarding themes and issues for future research projects.
- There are examples of excellent working relationships between key adults in schools and disadvantaged learners that make a significant difference.
- Some schools recognise that intervention and further tutoring are not effective when home school links are not strong, and/or parents feel

disenfranchised from the educational experience. For example, some schools are beginning to develop broader family learning programmes to address parental reluctance or refusal to accept additional support for their children.

- Schools and academies have chosen to engage in work to improve relationship between parents, children and teachers to increase aspiration and outcomes for learners. This has been delivered through:
 - School cluster development work and activities
 - Lincolnshire Inclusion Team and associated training offer which has developed the importance of positive relationships between parents, children and school
- Some Schools are participating in national research projects such as the 'Families and Schools Working Together' programme developed by Save the Children and the University of York that develops positive parenting within the context of schools working with families (Please see Background Documents).

Support provided to Looked After Children

Additional support for Children in Care is provided to schools through the Virtual School primarily through the allocation of 'The LAC Pupil Premium Grant' to support the child in the school they attend. The home school has the responsibility for the progress and attainment of our Looked After Children. The Virtual School also provides advice and support to schools as follows:

- English and Maths tuition provided by the Virtual School at home and in school through Electronic Personal Education Plan (Epep) process
- Exam practice sessions
- Virtual School mentoring and intervention to ensure students are supported through the stressful exam period particularly between November-June in Year 11
- Applications for special consideration such as extra time in exams from exam boards
- Tracking of progress through six weekly school survey cycle by the Virtual School with follow up through the Electronic Personal Education Plan (Epep) process or more regular intervention, support and advice if appropriate
- Three Epeps per year as a minimum with regular contact with students and schools on impact of additional support from Virtual School Coordinators
- Working with schools to ensure re-marks of exams are timely where necessary
- Early and regular intervention from Year 10 to include Maths and English catch up over the Summer Holidays before going into Year 11.
- The Virtual School also supports the training of Designated Teachers, Foster Carers and Social Care Teams on educational matters

Best practice at other councils for improving Key Stage 4 performance of all pupils and Looked After Children

To inform the Working Group, a review of the practice across the country was carried out through reviewing data, Ofsted analysis of regions and knowledge of effective areas highlighted in national publications from the Department for Education. This was intended to give the Working Group an understanding of effective practice to help reduce the educational gap for children experiencing disadvantage against their peers within a national context.

The Working Group carried out conversations with Nottinghamshire County Council, at the East Midlands Education Network events, and with contacts in London Boroughs to draw conclusions around what could be done differently or additionally to the existing offer in Lincolnshire. Members of the Working Group have undertaken visits to schools and events to explore work being delivered in the county, including the work of the Young Peoples Learning Partnership and University College London. Ten Lincolnshire schools are currently participating in the University's Promoting the Achievement of Looked After Children (PALAC) programme and this work was considered.

Research has been carried out around authorities achieving above the National average for disadvantaged learners specifically. This has focussed on the provision in Barnet, Camden, Gloucestershire, Hammersmith & Fulham, Hounslow, Islington, Kensington, Lambeth and Southwark. This has been very informative to strengthen the recommendations provided below and recognise the differences between what works well and can be transferred to a large rural county such as Lincolnshire.

Further conversations will be maintained through these avenues as well as specifically for Looked After Children through the East Midlands Regional Virtual Heads Group.

Looking at the work of other Local Authorities has been helpful, but has not necessarily provided an insight into what could be done differently in Lincolnshire as each Local Authority has a different context, structure and model of school improvement based on its strategic direction and circumstances. For example, some Local Authorities maintain a significant school improvement service that trades training, materials and resources around this topic, but generally, as the majority of secondary schools have become academies, all Local Authorities recognise that academies do not have to engage or participate with the Local Authority, as their lines of accountability are with the Regional Schools Commissioner and Secretary of State. Therefore, most authorities take the role of champion of pupil outcomes, offering influence and a strategic view of what needs to be improved and this is communicated through head teacher briefings and networking events which Lincolnshire does regularly.

Proposed alternative learning methods and support that could be used in schools to raise the attainment levels of pupils at Key Stage 4

The Working Group recognises that the funding and selection of materials, resources, interventions and staff are the responsibility of the educational setting

where the learner attends. The role of the Local Authority is to effectively share best practice regularly through the most appropriate forums and to influence schools through its democratic mandate. The Working Group has discussed some of the good practice as outlined in the report as well as considered a number of others from their own experiences of school visits.

Educational research is accessible through the nationally funded "Education Endowment Foundation" and this resource provides a useful way of engaging in and disseminating research. The Education Endowment Foundation provide a wealth of research on effective interventions with many of their research studies focusing on raising the attainment levels of disadvantaged pupils and Looked After Children. We are fortunate that the Education Endowment Foundation is a working partner with the LLP and continues to support the development of new research projects in the county. For example over 300 Lincolnshire schools and academies are participating in a county wide project (The Mobilise Project) around 'Making effective use of Teaching Assistants' in partnership with the Education Endowment Foundation, commissioned by the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership and supported by Lincolnshire County Council. This is to ensure that research and interventions are being utilised and have high impact on pupil outcomes. Further detail on The Mobilise Project is provided in the Background Documents section.

Lincolnshire County Council operates a community learning partnership which provides a family learning offer that is used well in primary schools. Engaging parents in their child's learning is crucial and has been shown to have positive impact on a child's achievement. The Working Group considered the role of this offer in supporting disadvantaged pupils and felt that family learning could be a route to further increase participation of families in education and thereby increase aspiration.

Consequently, a series of recommendations have been created that the School Performance Working Group feel could positively contribute to improved outcomes for disadvantaged and Looked After Children.

2. Conclusion and Recommendations

The School Performance Working Group recommends the following next steps be taken to support this area of improvement within Lincolnshire:

1. Lincolnshire County Council locality leads to frequently include disadvantaged and Children Looked After in regular reviews of school performance.
2. Lincolnshire County Council Locality Leads support and challenge leaders to champion outcomes for disadvantaged and Looked After Children.
3. Lincolnshire Locality Leads to co-ordinate and maintain knowledge of skills, expertise and best practice from the sector and enable it to be shared at district level where resources, staffing and additional provision could be arranged and delivered effectively.

4. Focused/themed success workshops should be developed in localities so that detailed needs are identified, solutions proposed and resources shared swiftly and with precision.
5. Lincolnshire County Council to promote and signpost access to high quality additional support through universities, teaching schools for professional development and pupil premium reviews. Where appropriate, schools will be strongly encouraged to commission a pupil premium review.
6. Consider the development of a pilot of families and schools working together effectively to support educational attainment and outcomes through either:
 - a. Signposting to schools to participate in this area of work with a provider
 - b. Commission Kyra as the research school to provide and deliver this aspect of work
7. Schools to provide access to individual mentoring for Disadvantaged and Looked After Children through Virtual School pilot project.
8. Encourage and support schools to engage in the Kyra Research School in a co-ordinated approach to improving outcomes for disadvantaged children through research based evidence of best practice that links areas of need, for example, accelerating progress in reading.
9. Promoting the achievement of Looked After Children through the PALAC programme. Ten schools are involved as of December 2016, with a view of supporting its expansion further.
10. Promote the Education Awards in Lincolnshire and celebrate the diversity of successes and achievements across all schools and learners across all key stages.
11. Continue to maintain a view of best practice to be shared regionally by placing a standing item on Regional Virtual School Heads Agenda and cascade back to Lincolnshire schools via Headteacher briefings.
12. Virtual School and Lincolnshire Children's University to focus on Looked After Children to include the use of the children's passport to promote educational outcomes.
13. High quality maths and English specialist tuition to be provided through the developing partnership between the Virtual School and Young People's Learning Programme to provide more effective interventions for Looked After Children at Key Stage Four.

3. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

No

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

Not Applicable

4. Background Papers

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Families and Schools Working Together	http://www.familiesandschoolstogether.com/content/home
The Mobilise Project - Making Effective use of Teaching Assistants	http://mobilise.kyrateachingschool.com/
The Education Endowment Foundation (Sutton Trust) - Pupil Premium Toolkit	https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/resources/teaching-learning-toolkit

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