

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

Report to:	<b>Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date:	<b>29 November 2013</b>
Subject:	<b>Closing the Attainment Gap (between children and young people who are or have been eligible for school meals and those who have not)</b>

**Summary:**

Overall educational attainment of pupils and post 16 students in Lincolnshire is above the national average and similar local authorities at all stages from early years to those at age 19. Performance of schools as measured by OfSTED has improved as 80% of primary schools are now good and outstanding schools. This is an improving picture for Lincolnshire. 69% of Secondary schools are good and outstanding and this is a priority for us.

One of the Department for Education's (DfE) and OfSTED's key foci is the progress of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM). Nationally and locally FSM pupils do not achieve as well as other pupils at all stages of their education.

To try and improve the performance of FSM pupils the Government has introduced the Pupil Premium. Schools claim Pupil Premium for any child who has had a free school meal in the last 6 years at £900 per pupil. This money is to allow the school to provide focussed support for each child on FSM. The money can be spent in a variety of ways but the school has to show impact. OfSTED check this thoroughly when they inspect and have available a great deal of data on the performance of FSM children. The amount of funding for each FSM pupil will increase to £1,300 from 2014/15.

This report summarises the performance of the Local Authority (LA) of the FSM children and the Local Authority's progress in closing the gap between the performance of FSM children and those not eligible for FSM.

**Actions Required:**

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is invited

1. To consider the attached report
2. To agree appropriate actions
3. To agree to receive 6 monthly updates to monitor progress and further

## 1. Background

It is vital that all young people leave education with good qualifications as:

- Outcomes at the end of secondary school account to a large extent for success in courses and qualifications thereafter.
- Adults who do not secure good literacy and numeracy skills by the age of 19 struggle to gain them subsequently.
- In the UK, pupils from the highest social class groups are three times more likely to enter university than those from the lowest social class groups.

The Gap shows that FSM children are more likely to leave school with lower attainment than their peers. This is a matter of concern nationally.

It is however interesting to note that, although the Government are focusing resources on FSM pupils, in 2012, nationally only 23% of low attaining Y6 children were eligible for FSM, and only 26% of FSM were low attainers. The LA and schools need to ensure that they are focussing on all pupils who are not attaining as highly as they should.

### What has been done nationally?

A number of measures have been put in place nationally to try to improve attainment for disadvantaged young people:

- The formula for funding Private, Voluntary and Independent early years settings includes a mandatory deprivation factor which is required to be used to support the Government target for ‘closing the gap’ between vulnerable groups and all other children.
- A programme for the expansion of high quality, free early education to disadvantaged two-year-olds is currently being rolled out in the UK to allow access for 20% of the most disadvantaged children, increasing to 40% in September 2014. The LA already has a trajectory to fund places in excess of the 40% criteria.
  - The Pupil Premium was introduced in 2011 and is additional funding paid to schools for pupils who have been registered for free school meals (FSM) at any point in the last six years. This is to increase to £1,300 for pupils from 2014/15 (it is £900 per pupil at present).
- Most recently 'narrowing the gap' has been rebranded as 'closing the gap' to clearly articulate that no gap is acceptable.
- The DfE performance tables now include a section on closing the gap.
- The new Ofsted inspection framework asks inspectors to make specific judgements about the performance of different pupil groups, the school's work to close gaps, and whether it is making effective use of pupil premium.
- ‘Destination data’ has been introduced which will be used as a measure of success for secondary schools and post 16 providers.
- Post 16 providers are required to publish how they allocate the 16 – 19 bursary funds which are required to be used to support students facing financial hardship.

## What is the Lincolnshire context?

It is vital to put the data for Lincolnshire into context as there are often differences across the county due to its rural nature. The following points provide some context:

- Lincolnshire has a lower than average proportion of children and young people who are known to be eligible for FSM. 12% of Lincolnshire pupils claim FSM compared to 17% nationally.
- The number of pupils claiming FSM has risen steadily over the past few years. In primary schools this has increased by over 5% in 5 years and in secondary by 4%. This has increased as more schools have introduced hot school meals, have made sure that pupils claiming FSM cannot be identified by their peers, and have encouraged parents to claim.
- We know that there are more children who are eligible to claim FSM but do not. Unfortunately we do not know who these children are so schools cannot target them directly.

As fewer pupils claim FSM than nationally the data is affected.

- Analysis at LA level suggests that the gap is wider in authorities with low proportions of FSM.
- Lincolnshire has relatively high employment but many have low wages meaning that they cannot claim FSM. It is a 'low wage not no wage' economy. This means that those children on FSM in Lincolnshire are generally the most economically disadvantaged.

There are a number of other factors relevant to Lincolnshire that need to be taken into account when comparing our performance with national figures:

- FSM children in Lincolnshire are more likely to have recognised SEND than their peers. They are 3 times more likely to have a statement and twice as likely to be at school action or school action plus.
- In many Lincolnshire schools the size of the FSM cohort is very small, particularly in primary schools. In 2012 161 primary schools had 5 or fewer FSM pupils in year 6 when they took SATs and 11 secondary schools, all grammar, had less than 5 pupils in year 11 (GCSE year). This makes the data unreliable for these schools.
- Nationally FSM children perform less well at schools where there is a low percentage of FSM children. There are 72 schools in Lincolnshire with less than 10% claiming FSM.

Although both nationally and locally non-FSM pupils outperform FSM pupils there are some schools where this is reversed. In Lincolnshire in 2013 the following schools fitted into this category:

- Lincoln Bishop King C of E Primary School
- Kirton Primary School
- St Paul's Community Primary and Nursery School
- Boston Staniland Primary and Nursery School
- Sir Francis Hill Community Primary School
- Ermine Primary School

- North Hykeham Sir Robert Pattinson Academy
- Welbourn Sir William Robertson High School

Generally, these are larger schools with higher numbers of FSM pupils.

### **Current Performance**

Some closing the gap data we have relates to the end of the academic year 2011/2012 ,whilst other data is our early indication of 2012/2013 performance.

### **Early Years - assessment at the end of reception year**

#### 1. What has been done in Lincolnshire?

- To ensure settings spend the deprivation fund as desired, the Birth to Five Service provides settings with a schedule detailing how they recommend this funding be used.
- Lincolnshire invested almost £1million to continue the Government's pilot to fund places for disadvantaged 2 year olds until the programme was rolled out and nationally funded from September 2013.
- Children's Services Locality Teams and Birth to Five Service Early Years Consultants and Children Centre Teachers focus on improving outcomes for vulnerable children.
- Due to an increase in the gap between FSM and non FSM in 2010, further data analysis was undertaken and used to target the settings with high percentages of children in the bottom 20% of Foundation Stage Profile outcomes.
- Lincolnshire County Council has commissioned CfBT Education Trust to deliver high quality Early Years Services in its Children's Centres across the county for a three year period.

#### 2. What does the data say about the gap between the performance of FSM and non FSM pupils?

For 2013 there is a new measure in Early Years which reports on the "good level of development" achieved by pupils. 65.5% of Lincolnshire pupils achieved this level compared to 52% of pupils nationally. This is an excellent outcome, and very early national data show us to be in the top five LAs. We do not yet have regional or statistical neighbour outcomes and this is a different measure to last year so there is no direct comparison to 2012.

With regard to closing the gap, the gap between children eligible for FSM and their peers is 16.8%. It was 19.1% in 2012. Improvement has been achieved through an accelerated rate of progress from FSM children although their peers have also improved.

#### 3. What are the next steps?

- Continue to focus on FSM children as previously.
- Promote widely the entitlement to free early years education for 2 year olds to increase take up.
- Identify schools, providers and settings with largest gaps in attainment and prioritise activity to challenge.

**Primary** – assessments at end of year 1 for phonics, end of KS1 and end of KS2

1. What has been done in Lincolnshire?

- The Team Around the Child (TAC) processes ensure educational and personal development are supported and promoted both in and out of school hours, and in providing children with access to provision to enable them to succeed in their relevant phase of education.
- Closing the gap is discussed within Education Adviser visits and is included in paired monitoring activities, for example when monitoring teaching and learning.
- The OfSTED pupil premium tracker has been promoted with all schools to promote best practice.
- Within the primary sector funding has been allocated to support the development of more formalised primary collaborations. This enables schools where the proportion of FSM is small to work collaboratively to widen opportunities and share resources.
- Governor training is provided which aims to provide Governors with a clear understanding of their statutory duties in ensuring the Pupil Premium Grant is allocated appropriately, monitored for impact and reported on the school website.

2. What does the data say about the gap between the performance of FSM and non FSM pupils?

### *Phonics*

Although this assessment is only in its second year the LA has performed well overall. 2012 data showed that we were in the top 5 highest performing LAs. We have improved in 2013 but we do not yet know how we compare to other LAs.

In 2013 the provisional data shows pupil performance increased by 7%, to 76%, although as we expected the national figure also increased. We remain 7% above the national average and that of our statistical neighbours. This is a very strong outcome.

The gap between FSM pupils and their peers was 19% in 2012 and is down to 17% this year. So, as well as overall performance improving, the gap has closed.

### *Key Stage 1*

The gap has closed again between pupils eligible for FSM and their peers who achieved level 2 or above in reading, writing and maths. Both groups have improved on last year's performance but FSM pupils have made more accelerated progress. In 2011 the gap was 21%, in 2012 19% and in 2013 it has reduced to 14%. This is a much improved picture.

### *Key Stage 2*

The gap has closed again between pupils eligible for FSM and their peers. Both groups have improved on last year's performance but FSM pupils have made more

accelerated progress. In 2011 the gap was 27%, in 2012 it was 22% and in 2013 it has reduced to 20%. This is a much improving picture.

3. What are the next steps?

- Continue to focus on FSM as a priority.
- Raise the profile of the gap in attainment with governing bodies and boards as appropriate.
- Use locality and district data and intelligence to target areas where the gap is widest.
- Provide consultancy or adviser support and challenge to schools to analyse current use and impact of pupil premium and support action planning.

**Secondary** – assessments at end of Key Stage 4 (GCSEs)

1. What has been done in Lincolnshire?

- The Team around the Child (TAC) processes ensure educational and personal development are supported and promoted both in and out of school hours, and in providing children with access to provision to enable them to succeed in their relevant phase of education.
- Closing the gap is discussed within Education Adviser visits and is included in paired monitoring activities, for example when monitoring teaching and learning.
- The OfSTED pupil premium tracker has been promoted with all schools to promote best practice.
- Governor training is provided which aims to provide Governors with a clear understanding of their statutory duties in ensuring the Pupil Premium Grant is allocated appropriately, monitored for impact and reported on the school website.
- The Careers Guidance Service continues to provide high quality independent and impartial careers guidance, helping to ensure that young people move on to learning providers at which they are likely to achieve the best outcomes for them as individuals.

2. What does the data say about the gap between the performance of FSM and non FSM pupils?

The 2013 provisional results for 5A\*-C including English and maths is 62%. These are above national at 59%, regional at 59% and statistical neighbours at 58%.

Closing the gap data for 2011 was 34% and for 2012 it was 32%. The 2013 data is not yet available but there is an improving trend.

3. What are the next steps?

- Continue to focus on FSM as a priority.
- Raise the profile of the gap in attainment with governing bodies and boards as appropriate.
- Use locality and district data and intelligence to target areas where the gap is widest.

- Provide consultancy or adviser support and challenge to schools to analyse current use and impact of pupil premium and support action planning.

## Post 16

1. What has been done in Lincolnshire?
  - Closing the gap has been identified as a key strategic priority for post 16 education and training.
  - Resources have been allocated to support activity to increase the number of apprentices.
  - The LA funded the careers service to work with young people not in education or training post 16 to engage them in learning.
  - A multi-agency 'Raising the Participation Age Vulnerable Learners' Group' has been established to address barriers to participation and attainment of vulnerable young people post 16.
  - A subcontract arrangement is being piloted with a Solutions 4 provider and the LA's own post 16 provider to improve participation amongst leavers from Solutions 4.
2. What does the data say about the gap between the performance of FSM and non FSM pupils?

Young people who have not achieved level 2 including English and Maths have, until now, been less likely to stay on in learning after the age of 16. Consequently, fewer young people who were entitled to Free School Meals stay on. The gap in Lincolnshire (27%) was worse than national in 2012 but 2013 data will not be available from the Department for Education for some time to enable this picture to be confirmed. Those who start level 3 courses at 16 are more likely to drop out of learning before they achieve it in Lincolnshire than in many other local authorities. Young people from poorer backgrounds are over-represented in this group. Nevertheless, the gap in level 3 achievement is broadly in line with national.

The Raising of the Participation age will require young people to stay in learning for longer. The introduction of Study Programmes requires all learning providers to continue to teach English and Maths while enabling them to tailor their programmes much better to the needs of each young person so that they are much less likely to drop out. However, we will not see the benefits of these changes, as they were only introduced in September 2013, until the first cohort reaches 19. We are working with all providers to support the introduction of these changes.

3. What are the next steps?
  - Work with post 16 providers to improve progression to level 3 for all learners but specifically FSM.
  - Work with post 16 providers to implement study programmes, traineeships and supported internships with a focus on FSM.
  - Evaluate the impact of the first stage of raising the participation age to identify reasons for non-participation with a specific focus on FSM pupils, including the impact of finance.

- Include the provision of information about young people who have been eligible for FSM in data sharing agreements with FE colleges and other post 16 providers to enable them to target appropriate support including bursary funding.
- Encourage schools to prioritise FSM pupils for careers guidance support.

## 2. Conclusion

The overall performance at all ages is good and the gap between the performance of FSM and other pupils is closing. However, the gap needs to continue to close; initially the target should be to ensure that LA gap data is at least in line with national data but eventually that the gap is closed.

Although the gap is closing at each key stage, overall it widens through Early Years, Key Stage 2, Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5.

Schools, colleges and settings are fully aware of the focus on FSM pupils and are working hard to ensure the gap is closed, as are LA officers. A number of actions have been recommended for each phase of education but to ensure that there is a clear strategy and co-ordination across all parts of the LA, it is recommended that a Strategic Board is formed with partners as the factors influencing the gap are wider than just school based. Elected members will have the opportunity to be included on the Board.

It is recommended that the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee requests further reports at six-monthly intervals to monitor progress and further explore “gap” issues. If this was agreed then the next report would be able to outline progress made with the strategy and share validated data with comparisons nationally and locally.

## 3. Consultation

### a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

N/A

## 4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix 1	Draft Action Plan

## 5. Background Papers

Unseen Children: access and achievement 20 years on - OfSTED 2013  
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/unseen-children-access-and-achievement-20-years>

The Pupil Premium: how schools are spending the funding successfully to maximise achievement – Ofsted February 2013  
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/pupil-premium-how-schools-are-spending-funding-successfully-maximise-achievement>

The Pupil Premium – Ofsted September 2012



<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/pupil-premium>

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**Appendix 1**  
**Closing the Gap DRAFT Action Plan – for Scrutiny Committee discussion and input**

Action	Timescale	Who	Outcomes	Progress
Form Strategic Board – to include representation from elected members				
Continue the focus on FSM children at all stages				
Raise the profile of the gap in attainment with governing bodies and boards as appropriate				
Use locality and district data and intelligence to target areas where the gap is widest				
Identify schools, providers and settings with largest gaps in attainment and prioritise activity to challenge				
Promote widely the entitlement to free early years education for 2 year olds to increase take up				
Provide consultancy or adviser support and challenge to schools to analyse current use and impact of pupil premium and support action planning				
Work with post 16 providers to improve progression to level 3 for all learners but specifically FSM				
Work with post 16 providers to implement study programmes, traineeships and supported internships with a focus on FSM				

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Evaluate the impact of the first stage of raising the participation age to identify reasons for non-participation with a specific focus on FSM pupils, including the impact of finance				
Include the provision of information about young people who have been eligible for FSM in data sharing agreements with FE colleges and other post 16 providers to enable them to target appropriate support including bursary funding				
Encourage schools to prioritise FSM pupils for careers guidance support				

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