

**Meeting of the Select Committee on Children's Services – 12 November 2009**

**Report of the Director of Children's Services**

**Secondary Education Support**

**Raising Attainment at Key Stage 4 – Progress Report**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To update the Committee on the work being undertaken to raise standards in Key Stage 4 (14 – 16 year olds).

**Background**

**Core activity with secondary schools**

2. As a Local Authority we are keen to ensure that early intervention of carefully selected programmes supports identified pupils in making the best possible progress.
3. A secondary national strategy (SNS) team is charged with providing support and advice to schools to achieve five national indicators. Namely,  
NI075 Achievement of 5 or more A\*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and mathematics  
NI078 Reduce the number of schools where under 30% of pupils achieve 5 A\*-C GCSE including English and mathematics  
NI084 Achievement of 2 or more A\*-C grades in Science GCSEs or equivalent  
NI086 Secondary schools judged as having good or outstanding standards of behaviour  
NI087 Secondary school persistent absence rate
4. Local Authority secondary strategy support for schools is informed through a balance of key messages from the National Secondary Strategy and the needs of pupils in Dudley. Advice and support is provided to schools to improve
  1. Subject leadership and management,
  2. Learning and teaching,
  3. Behaviour,
  4. Also in partnership with Education Welfare, to improve attendance.

- Cumulatively, these opportunities have made a positive impact on standards attained across Dudley schools.

### **Achievement of 5 or more A\*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and mathematics**

- Collectively, Dudley Local Authority records 65% 5A\*-C, 4 percentage points up on that achieved in 2008 and 47.9% 5A\*-C including English and mathematics, however, if we include all qualifications this rises to 49.7%, 2.6 percentage points up on that achieved in 2008. (This is still provisional data and is not confirmed)
- These are the best set of individual school results since 2001. The results continue Dudley's trend of year on year improvement.

### **Reduce the number of schools where under 30% of pupils achieve 5 A\*-C GCSE including English and mathematics**

- Dudley continues to improve against this indicator. The number of schools below the floor target fell from three to two. There are robust actions and plans in place to support these two schools.
- Five of our core and additional support schools are Black Country Challenge Pathway to Achievement schools. The Local Authority SNS team works closely with Black Country Challenge (BCC) consultants in two schools (Pensnett and Castle High) making educational improvements for pupils.

2009 outcomes for four Dudley's BCC schools are positive.

Castle	27% (-1 percentage points on 2008)
Coseley	38% (+3 percentage points on 2008)
Pedmore TC	45% (+10 percentage points on 2008)
Pensnett	19% (+8 percentage points on 2008)
Wordsley	37% (+12 percentage points on 2008)

- Wordsley has recorded significant, and expected, improvement. Pedmore has recorded its best result over the last four years.
- Collectively, the impact measure of consultancy support for these schools was 33 percentage points, in 2009. This evidences the positive impact the SNS team and the range of strategies had on these schools in 2008-09 academic year.

## **Achievement of 2 or more A\*-C grades in Science GCSEs or equivalent**

12. In 2009, 49% of pupils (from a currently incomplete data) attained '2 good sciences'. This is up 2.5 percentage points on 2008.
13. The foundations for this improvement are set in Key Stage 3. There is much activity that supports Key Stage 3. A science focus on improving attainment at Level 6 and above, aims to improve the number of pupils gaining 2 good sciences at GCSE and increase the number of pupils choosing to take up science post 16.

## **Priorities for 2009-10**

### **(a) Universal and targeted advice and support to schools.**

14. Universal support is provided through key messages and continuing professional development at termly Subject Leader Development Meeting (for English, Mathematics, Science and ICT departments); through termly Behaviour Leads and Attendance Leads meetings; and through six weekly meetings for Secondary Deputy Heads/ or Assistant Heads. Collectively, these meetings are well attended and well received. Key teachers in schools welcome the support and advice the SNS team offers and are encouraged by the direction given. Evaluations of such meetings are always positive, for instance, they say that they find the days excellent and very useful, providing messages from specialist and professional input from consultants that will inform practice back in school, in addition, providing opportunities for teachers to network, to partner up with colleagues from other schools and share good practice. Such opportunities embed good practice and build capacity within schools.

### **(b) One to One Tuition.**

15. This programme of intervention will be focused on pupils who are falling behind their peers and are likely not to achieve their expected grade at the end of their current key stage.
16. All schools will receive DCSF funding to run this programme. Progress will be closely monitored through a secure DCSF data entry website. Termly review and evaluation will track the impact of this initiative.

### **(c) Assessment for Learning and Assessing Pupils' Progress.**

17. The SNS team is currently focused on developing and embedding Assessment for Learning and developing Assessing Pupils Progress, across all four core subjects (English, mathematics, science and ICT). It is too early to record an

impact measure. This will be monitored termly through Subject Leader Development Meetings (SLDMs), SNS team meetings and SIP visits.

#### **(d) Functional Skills.**

18. The team continues to offer tailored support for schools in developing Functional Skills in English, mathematics and ICT.
19. Although early days in terms of Diploma delivery, feedback from schools is that where Functional Skills has become embedded in schemes of work, students are achieving passes largely in line with the tier entered for.
20. All Functional Skills training has been delivered to, and undertaken by the 5 Consortia groups based one in each township across the LA.

#### **(e) Ethnic Minority Achievement Programme**

21. The work of the team is recognised regionally and nationally, across the core subjects in our work with ethnic minority pupils. The SNS team has worked collaboratively, and in partnership, with the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service to improve standards and progress of Pakistani and Yemeni (Muslim) pupils for three years. Now in its fourth year, this intervention programme has grown and includes any underachieving minority ethnic group of pupils. The number of schools involved has increased from five (2006) to eleven (2009). Work began in Key Stage 3, mostly with Year 8 pupils. This programme has yet to impact on GCSE results. This will be evidenced after the 2010 GCSE results. However, evidence shows improvement in the progress the target group of pupils (20 pupils in each school) make. More pupils are making expected progress, or better.

#### **(f) Leading teacher programme**

22. This term will see the development of a leading teacher programme in mathematics. Their role will be to support and advise on teaching and learning. Ultimately, their work will impact on the 5A\*-C including English and mathematics.

#### **Secondary schools judged as having good or outstanding standards of behaviour (in Ofsted reports)**

23. Out of twenty one secondary schools, 4 schools are judged to be outstanding and 13 schools to be good.
24. Five schools are currently engaged with the National Strategy through the work of the local authority Behaviour and Attendance Consultant working in

partnership with the Regional Adviser for Behaviour and Attendance. One of the four schools at its most recent Ofsted has already moved the judgement on behaviour from satisfactory to good but wishes to remain part of the group to further embed good practice and learn from developments in other schools. The remaining four schools have only just joined the programme. Therefore, it is too early to report on impact. Their progress will be monitored on a termly basis.

### **Secondary school persistent absence rate (PA)**

25. Attendance across secondary schools remains at a 10 year high.
26. However, nine schools are identified as having a significant number of pupils who are persistently absent from schools. This is where 5% or more pupils, across the school, have 20% absence or more. Five of those schools have made significant improvements and PA only persists across four key schools.
27. Support is being provided, to all nine PA schools, by the Education Welfare Service working in partnership with a representative from the National Strategies and the LA Behaviour and Attendance consultant.

### **Finance**

28. The work of the Education, Play and Learning Division is financed from Local Authority base budget and Standards Fund Grants.

### **Law**

29. The Council maintains school under the provisions of the Children and Education acts and may do anything incidental to, conducive to, or which facilitates the discharge of that function under section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972.

### **Equality Impact**

30. This report takes into account the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

### **Recommendation**

31. It is recommended that the Cabinet Members receive this report and note the action that has been taken.



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Mark Wyatt  
Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Dave Perrett, Interim Assistant Director for Education, Play and Learning  
Telephone: 01384 814250  
Email: [Dave.perrett@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:Dave.perrett@dudley.gov.uk)