

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, ADULT AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

TO:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	6 NOVEMBER 2014	AGENDA ITEM:	13
TITLE:	SCHOOL PERFORMANCE 2013-14		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR ENNIS	PORTFOLIO:	EDUCATION
SERVICE:	EDUCATION	WARDS:	All
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The academic year 2013-14 saw a second successive year of significant change, particularly in GCSE examinations. This report looks at the provisional performance of schools in Reading for the academic year 2013-14 at five stages:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception year children)
- Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2)
- Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6, ending with "SAT"s)
- Key Stage 4 (end of compulsory secondary age, typically GCSE qualifications)
- Key Stage 5 (end of sixth form education, typically GCE 'A' levels)

1.2 The overall Reading performance is compared with both the national standards and benchmarks. Where data is published, the performance is also compared with other authorities that are considered to be statistically similar to Reading, our Statistical Neighbours (SN). The statistical neighbours have been changed for 2014-15 so trend information will not be possible next year.

1.3 The Council is committed to working in partnership with schools so that all children in Reading can benefit from an excellent education. The well attended Landscape conference in February 2014 saw the local authority, Headteachers, Chairs of Governors and other education professionals commit to a shared goal to achieve top quartile LA level performance by summer 2017. These results show some progress towards the overall goal with improvements against the national average in all key stages.

1.4 Reading schools have been working with a specific focus to reduce the performance gaps in a number of groups as relevant to the individual school. Across the borough there are three key groups including those on free school meals, with special educational needs and in three underperforming ethnic groups. The gaps have not reduced this year, despite the absolute level of achievement growing and more work is required to accelerate the progress of these groups.

1.5 A new framework for school inspection was introduced in January 2012 which has seen two further revisions in September 2012 and September 2013. This has continued to 'raise the bar' and has further refined some areas of focus. Under this framework Reading has

maintained its improvement with the percentage of schools rated as good or outstanding remaining at about 74% in the twelve months to July 2014.

- 1.6 There was no Ofsted inspection of the local authority's school improvement service in the academic year 2013-14.
- 1.7 Committee will note that the Council is responsible for ensuring that all pupils in the borough can and do access education. For maintained schools, that includes the responsibility and authority to intervene as required. For Academy schools, the local authority has no power of intervention but is expected to challenge any underperformance and, if necessary report unresolved concerns to the Secretary of State for Education.
- 1.8 From September 2013 the expectation for L4+ reading, writing and mathematics individually and combined has risen to 65% for primary schools. The School Improvement Team is already working with nine schools whose performance in 2013-14 gives rise to concerns, including challenge to Academies.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

COMMITTEE is asked to:

- 2.1 confirm its commitment to working with all schools in Reading in order to enable all children in Reading to benefit from an excellent education that meets individual needs, develops great learning skills and helps children to grow in confidence and resilience and to deliver on the shared goals set out at the Landscape conference in 2014.
- 2.2 note the levels of performance at each of the five stages as set out in section 4 and to congratulate all of the pupils who have worked hard in the last academic year, along with all of staff in Reading's schools.
- 2.3 note that although there is evidence of progress in all phases in this year, further improvement is required to secure the level of achievement that the borough seeks for all of its pupils.
- 2.5 note the improvements in attainment for those eligible for the pupil premium and support the continued focus on this area through the Landscape conference 2015.
- 2.6 Support the independent review of the educational support for those BME groups who have historically done less well and receive the recommendations in spring 2015.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 All pupils are subject to a number of tests at the end of each phase during their time at school which determine school performance against national benchmarks in terms of levels and grades (achievement) and progress made from various starting points (progress)
- 3.2 The Government has set minimum standards in key stage 2 and key stage 4. At KS2 the Floor Standard for 2013/14 was 65% of pupils achieving Level 4+ in reading, writing, mathematics and 2 levels of progress in reading, writing, and mathematics compared to the national medians in each subject. At KS4 the Floor Standard is 40% of pupils achieving 5 A*-to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics.

3.2 Reading's results at all stages are compared with both the national benchmarks and averages and those of our statistical neighbours; 10 other local authorities that are considered to be statistically similar to Reading. The current statistical neighbours are: Bath & NE Somerset, Brighton & Hove, Bristol, Bromley, Derby, Bedford, Milton Keynes, Sheffield, Sutton and Trafford. These SN will change from September 2014

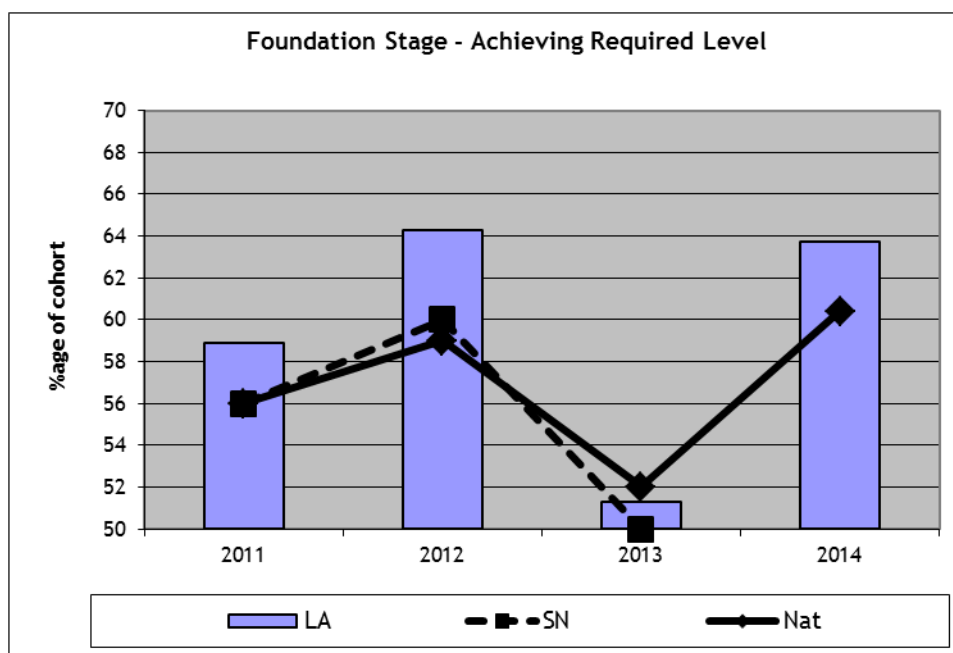
3.4 All schools are the responsible data owners for the pupil level data in their schools. All schools in Reading have entered a data sharing agreement to allow an aggregated analysis to be provided in this report. The report uses a common format for graphs, showing data for the last four academic years for three sets of data: the Local Authority (the columns); the National average (solid line); and the statistical neighbour performance (dotted line).

3.5 The data is not yet validated, a process which has been slowed by the national issues relating to GCSE results this summer.

4. THE PERFORMANCE

Early Years Foundation Stage

4.1 The benchmark for the Early Years Foundation stage changed in 2012-13. Only the last two years can be compared statistically.

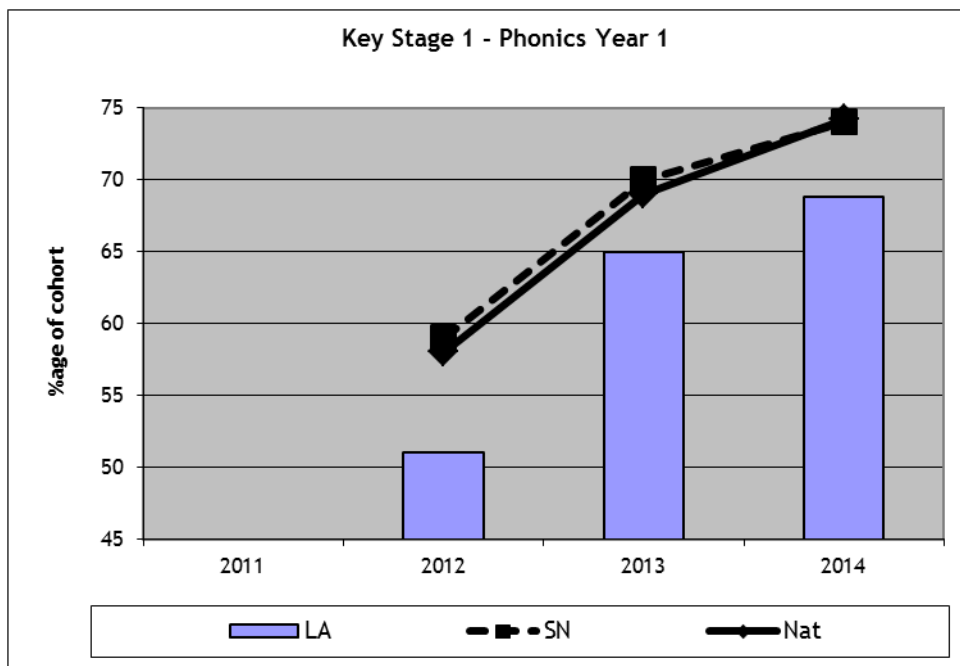


4.2 The standard being measured now includes more areas, with all LA's and settings reporting on the same elements. Reading's early years settings are to be congratulated on this 12% rise and position 3% above the national average. There is still work to do to secure performance in the top quartile however the youngest pupils in our schools are being given a better start than ever before.

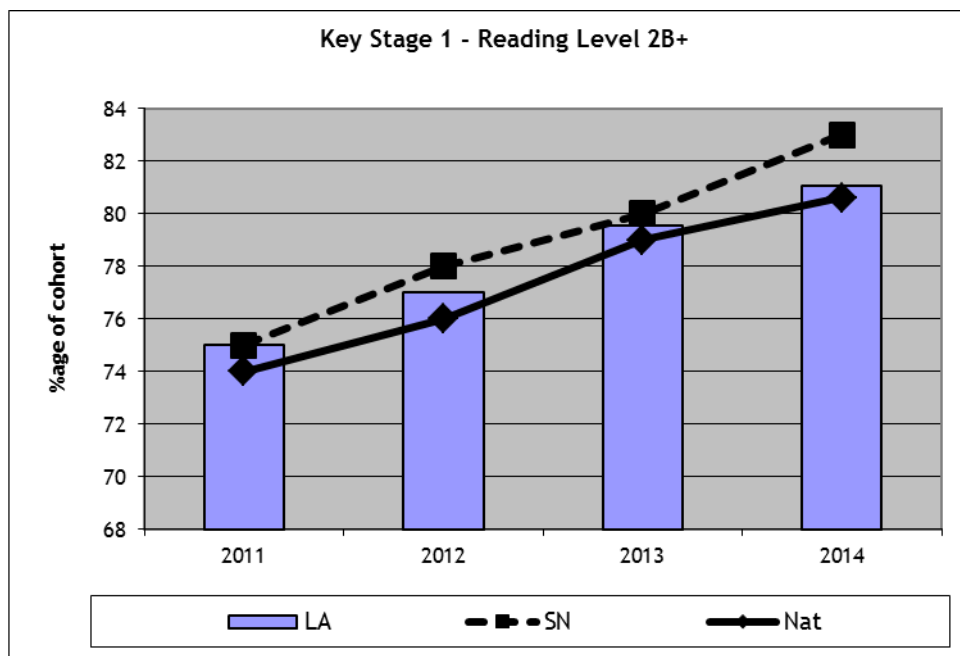
Key Stage 1: Years 1 and 2 of the primary phase

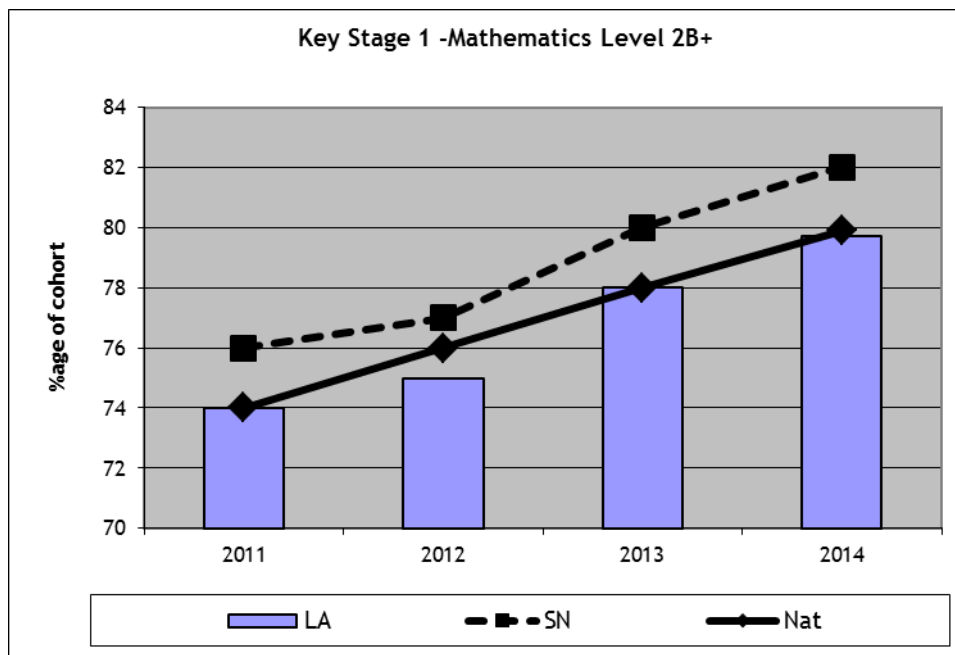
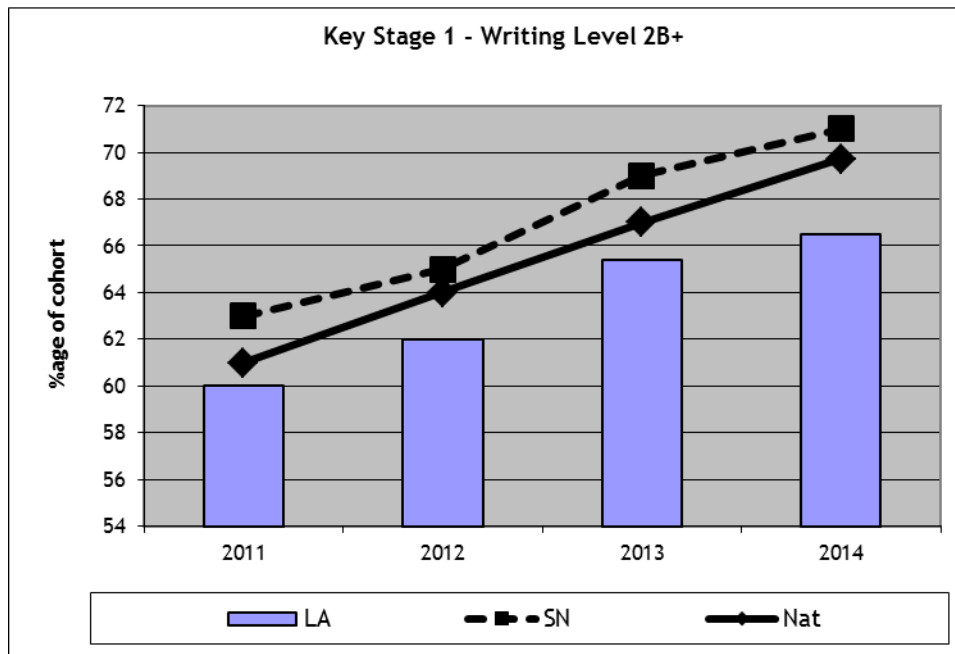
4.3 Achievement in KS 1 continues to improve in Reading schools. National standards are also rising and Reading schools are keeping pace with that trend. At the end of Year 1, the pupils undertake a "Phonics" screening check and the following graph shows an increase in performance of 4%, which has maintain the gap with the national average at 4% points.

Pupils are required to be rechecked in Year 2 if they had not met the required level in Year 1. Of the pupils being rechecked, 86% of pupils met the required level consistent with the national average of 86.5%.



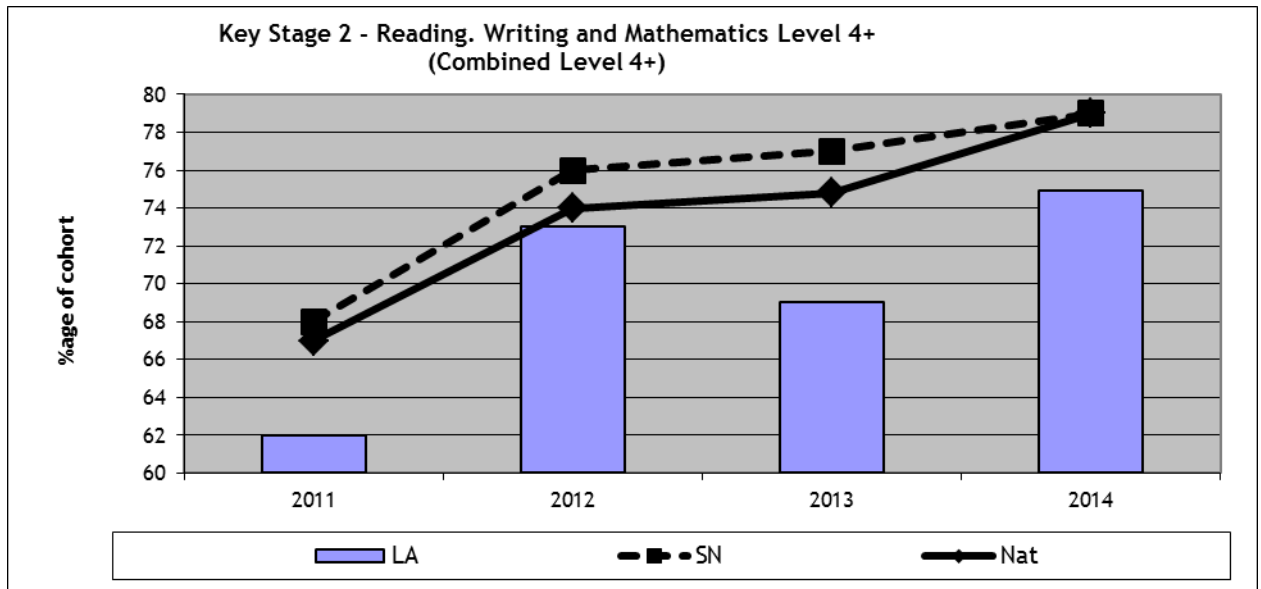
4.4 The following three graphs show the performance in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2) at level 2b+. They all show continued year on year improvement over the last four years with similar increases nationally. We need to accelerate the improvement in all areas to reach the shared goal by 2017. Focus is required on writing where the gap to the national average has grown to 3% points.



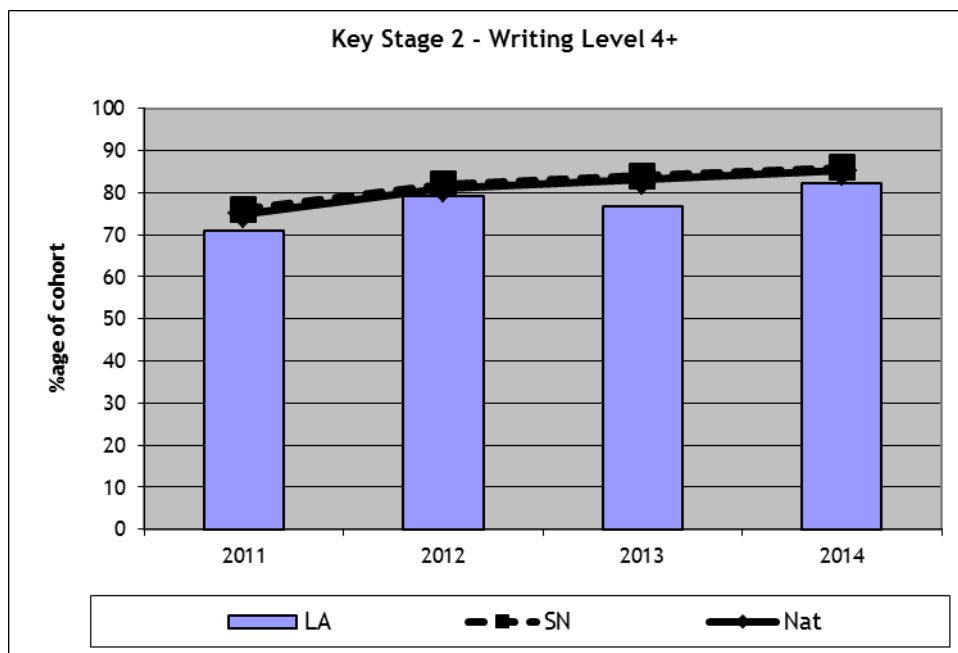


Key Stage 2: Years 3 to 6 in Primary phase

- 4.5 Pupils take tests (SATs) for reading and mathematics and are assessed by teachers in writing and science. Level 4+ is the current benchmark. However OfSTED and national data sets also now report on L4B+. Additionally pupils are expected to make a minimum of 2 levels progress from the end of KS1 and 3 levels of progress will normally be required to secure a Good or Outstanding judgement by OfSTED.
- 4.6 The national benchmark (and one aspect of the Key Stage 2 Floor Target) is the percentage of pupils achieving level 4+ in reading, writing and mathematics. The standard for 2013-14 is 65%. The 2011-14 figures are shown below:

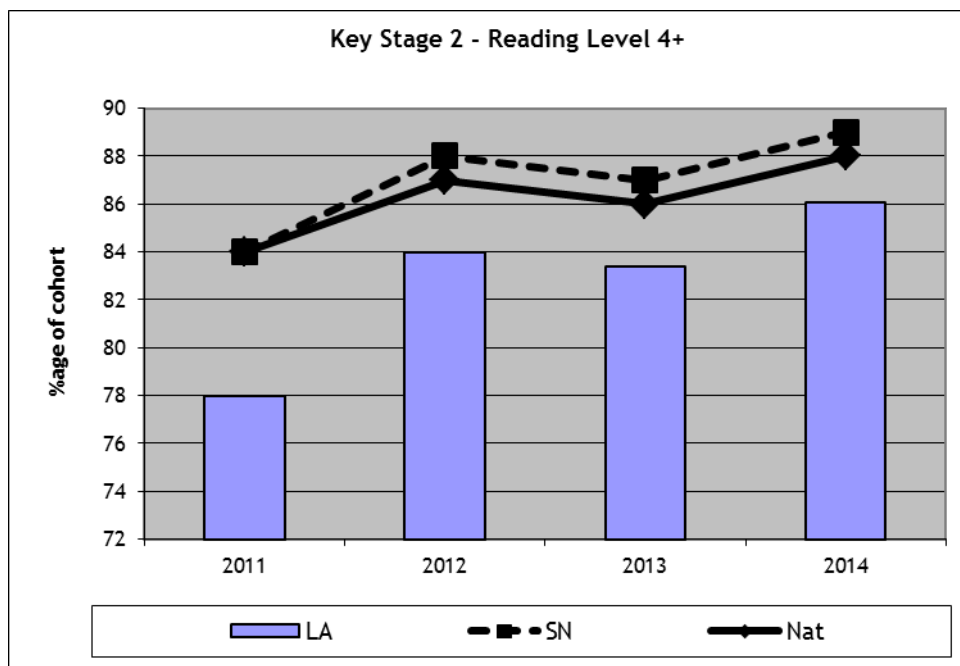


- 4.7 Our absolute performance has increased by 12.5% since 2011 and the gap to the national average has been reduced to 4%. Eight schools (a mix of maintained and Academy schools) failed to meet the attainment aspect of the floor standard of 65% of pupils achieving L4+ in all three subjects. This is the same number of schools that missed the 2012-13 attainment level although it is worth noting that only three of those are the same schools with four of the five moving above the threshold were maintained schools who were engaged by the local authority school improvement service.
- 4.8 For maintained schools, local authority resource in terms of advisory time has been allocated to support the improvement activity and engage school to school and other support as appropriate. The School Improvement Team is continuing to work with the schools identified in 2013 and a further four schools whose performance has fallen year on year.
- 4.9 Teacher assessed writing results: the following graph shows an slowly increasing national trend while have narrowed that gap to 2% points with a four year high of 81%. This is a solid improvement and needs to be consolidated to drive up overall performance.

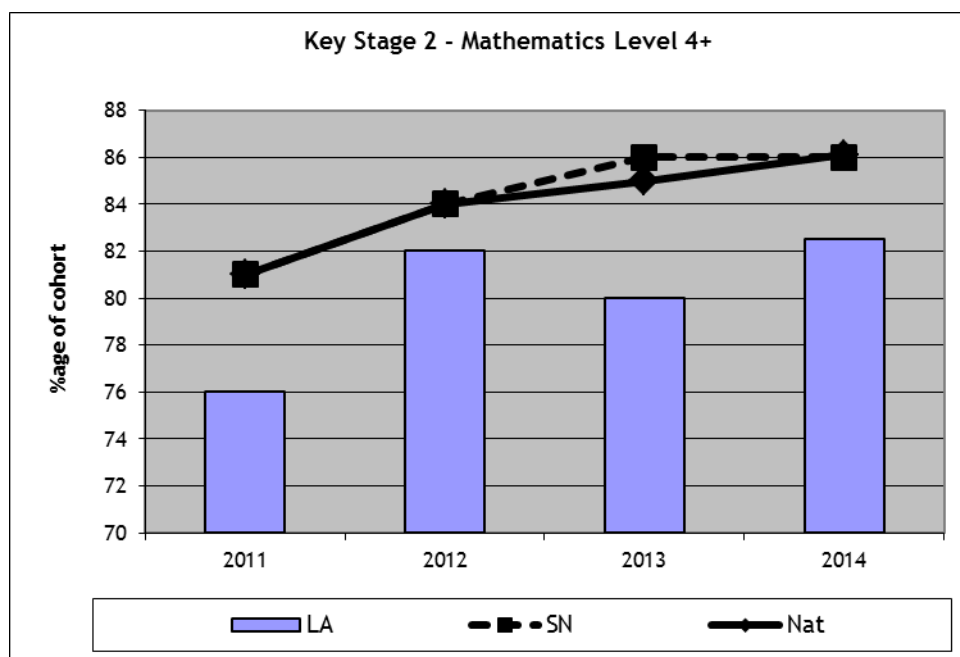


4.10 Twelve schools have been engaged in a multi-year writing programme devised by a national expert, Pie Corbett, which has helped driving up writing standards in some schools. The schools involved are sharing the best practices with each other.

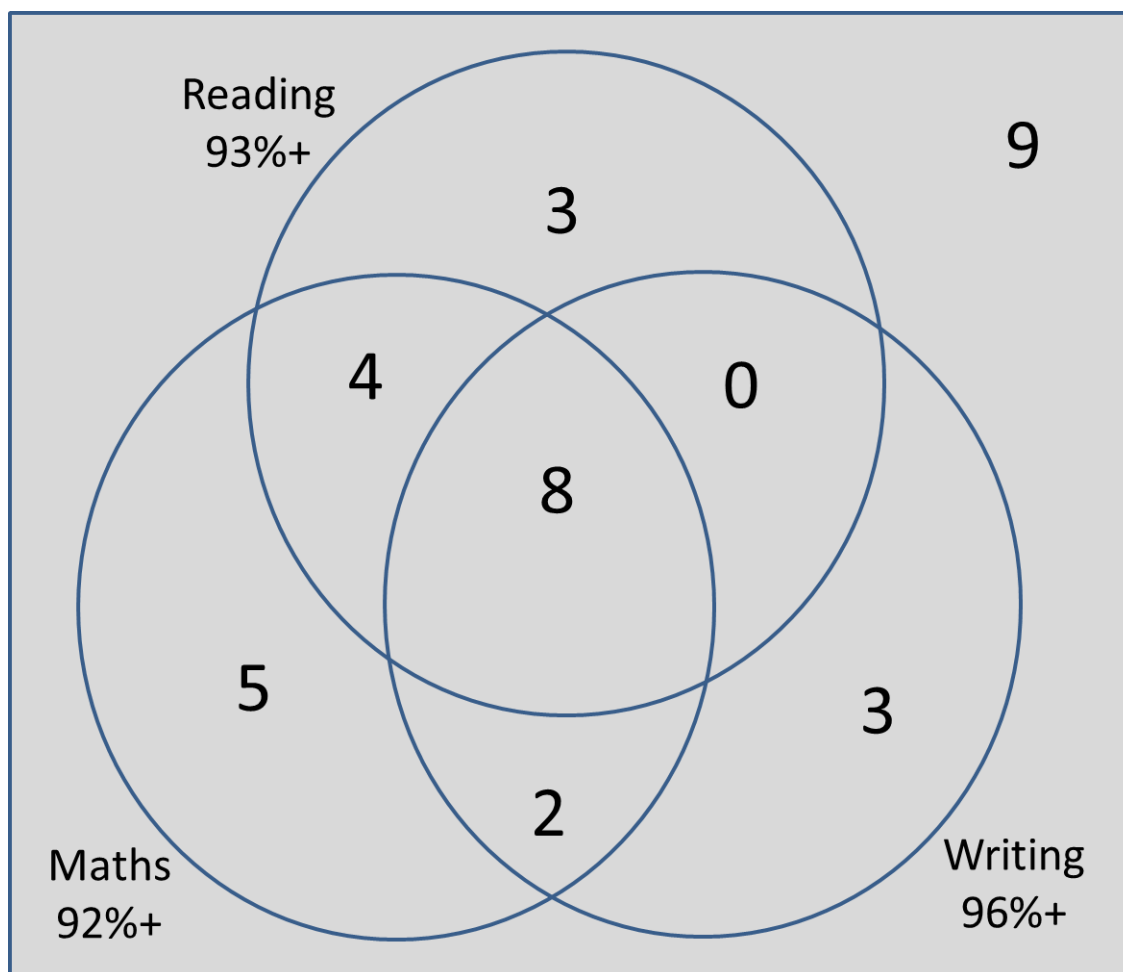
4.11 Overall reading results: the following graph shows Reading's results bouncing back by 3% points, however we are still 2% points behind the national average. Further acceleration is required in this area.



4.12 The following graph shows the mathematics results which once again have bounced back to the highest level reached in Reading, however the national average continues to increase and we are still 3% points below that level.



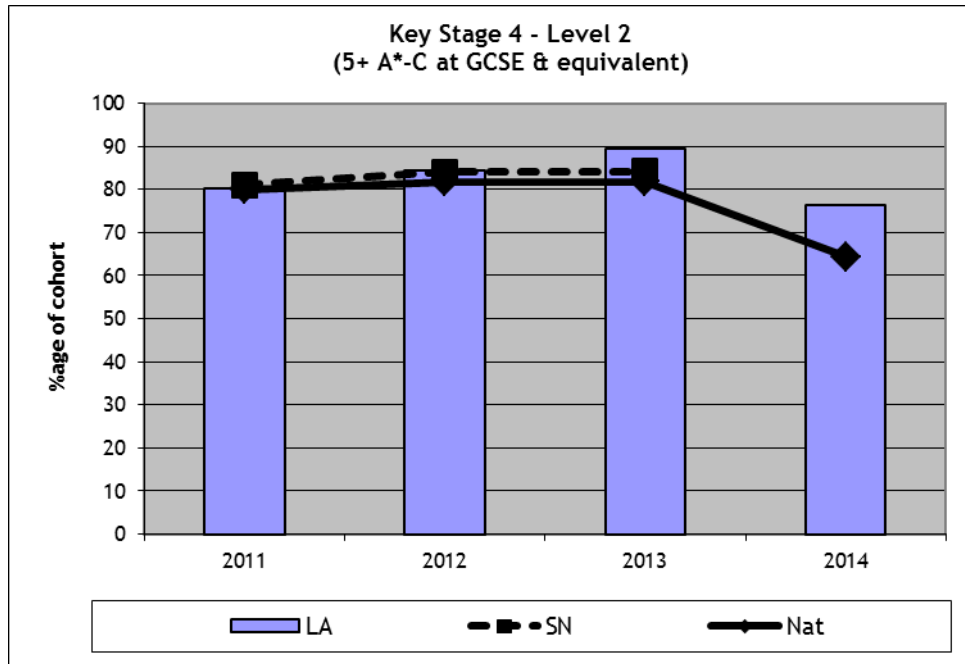
- 4.13 A school is judged to be under the floor standard if it falls below the attainment target as explained in 4.6 and a school fails to achieve the national median percentage of children achieving 2 levels of progress in Key Stage 2. The median is calculated later in the year, however based on provisional data, the following Venn diagram indicates primary school performance in 2013-14.



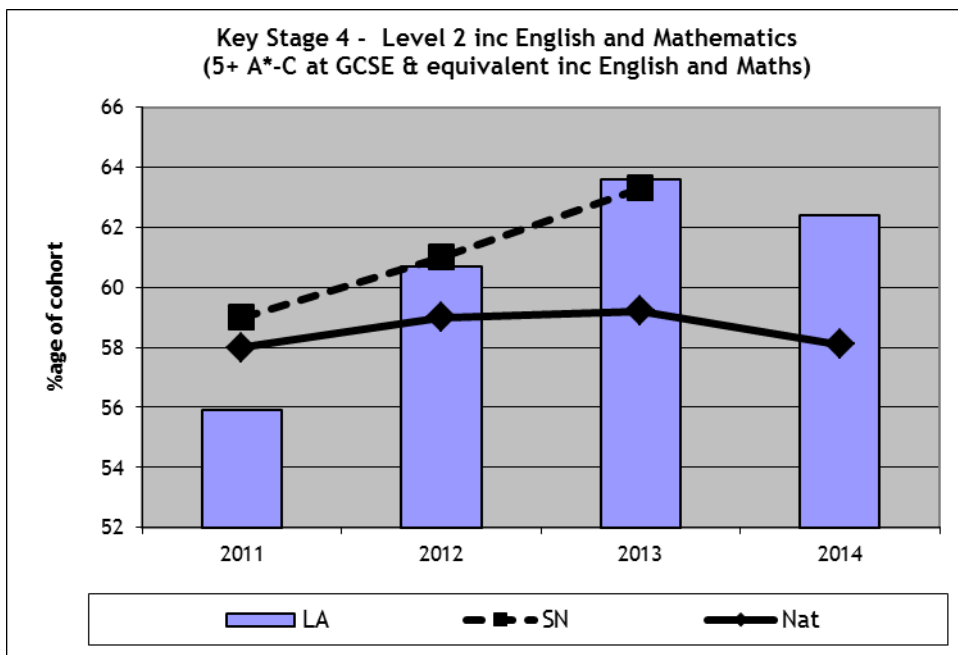
- 4.14 The chart indicates that in eight schools pupils make better than national average progress during key stage 2 from September 2010 to July 2014. This is a doubling from 2013. However in nine schools that is not true in any subject and even schools with high attainment have to ensure that progress matches those high standards. It will be increasingly important for schools and their governing bodies to ensure that all children are making better than, and accelerated levels of progress, in all years for the results to make a sustained rise. The focus of the council's education service work in the primary phase will be to ensure that every school is developing the progress of every child each year.

Key Stage 4: Secondary GCSE and Equivalent Results

- 4.15 2014 was a year of major upheaval in GCSE results due to national changes which include the removal of January exams, the reduction in the range of "equivalent" qualifications and the continued curriculum development. This has led to a wide range of national results and individual school variation. The following graph shows the proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C. The absolute fall reflects the national picture however Reading remains above the national average. We are still waiting for full data to assess the overall standing of the authority.

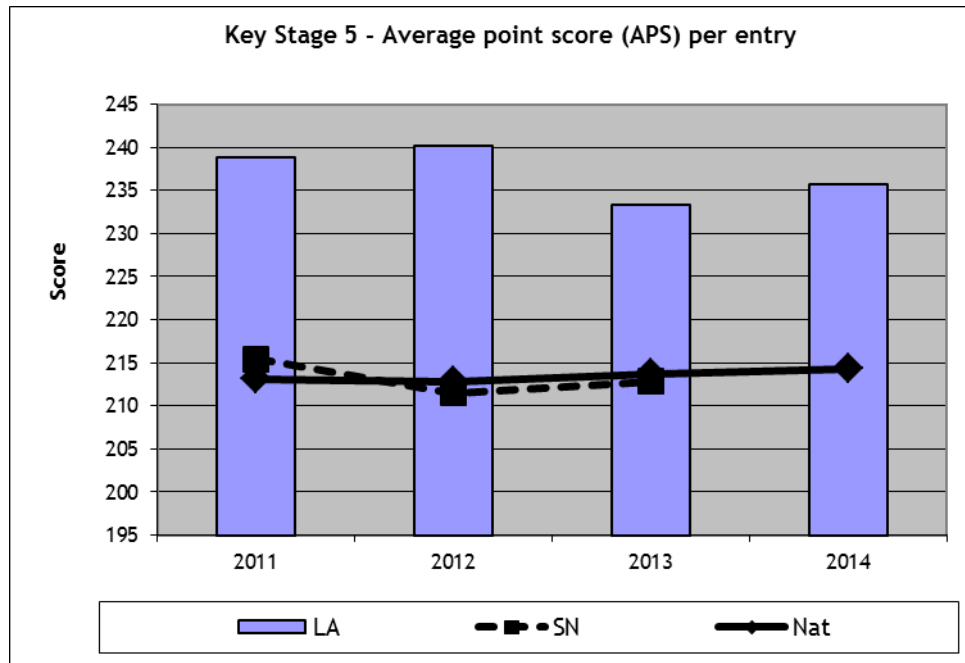


4.16 The national standard measure of 5+ A*-C grades including English and Mathematics, which is the national benchmark with a floor target of 40% has also seen a fall across the country, with Reading holding up well. The graph below shows these results.



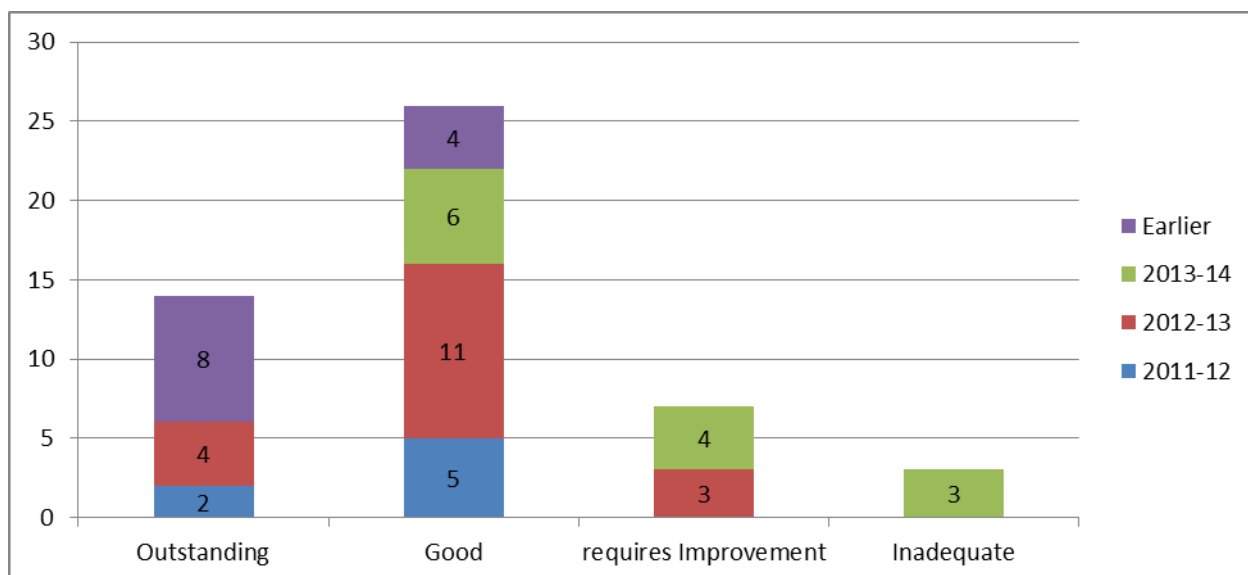
Key Stage 5: Sixth form and college results

4.17 Reading schools continue to lead the way nationally in this area due to the over representation of the two grammar schools in this result. Measured by average point score either per entry or per candidate, Reading continues to be well above the natural average. The graph below indicates a small rise in absolute results against a very high bar.



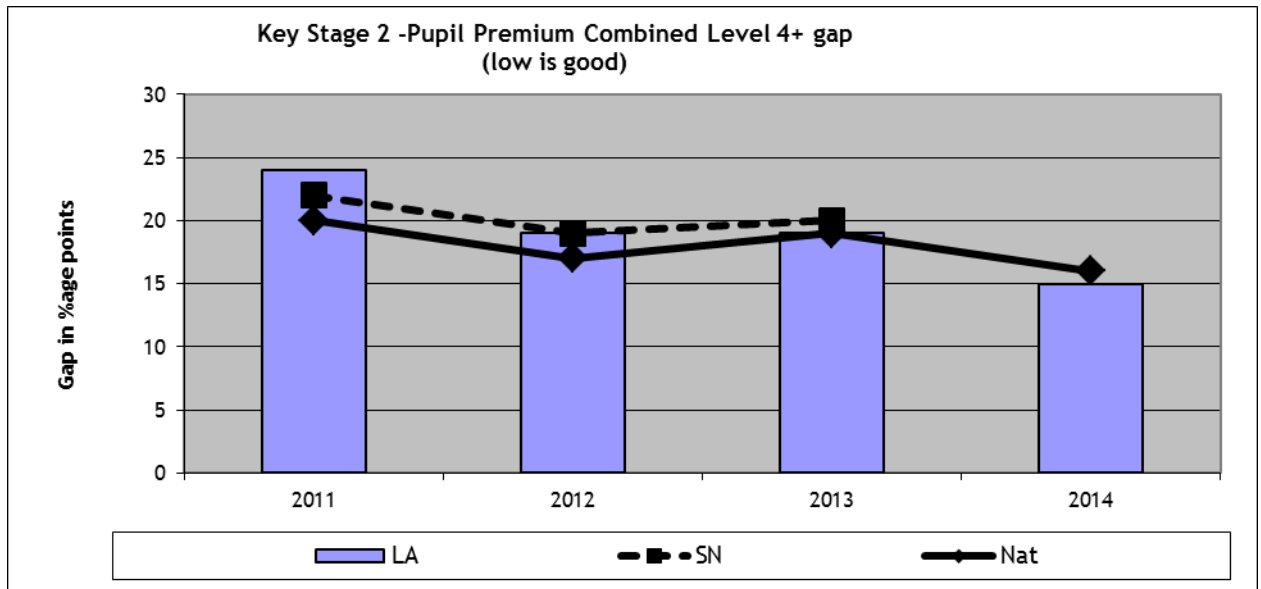
Ofsted Inspection Performance

- 4.18 At the end of academic year 2011-12, Reading had 54% of schools judged as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. In January 2012, a new inspection framework which 'raised the bar' was launched and has been revised further in September 2012 and September 2013. Each time the focus of inspection has been sharpened particularly around achievement and progress. This inspection framework maintained the four numerical grades, with 1 being "Outstanding" and 4 being Inadequate. The latter is further sub-divided into Special Measures and Notice to Improve. Which of these two labels OfSTED chooses to use is mainly dependent on their view of the capacity of the leadership and management in the school to affect rapid change. The previous judgement of 3 had it's categorisation changed from "Satisfactory" to "Requires Improvement".
- 4.19 The following graph shows the result of inspections during 2012-14 for all Reading schools. There are 74% of all schools rated as "Good" or "Outstanding" at the end of August 2014 - an increase of 20% points over the two years and maintenance of the position during 2013-14.



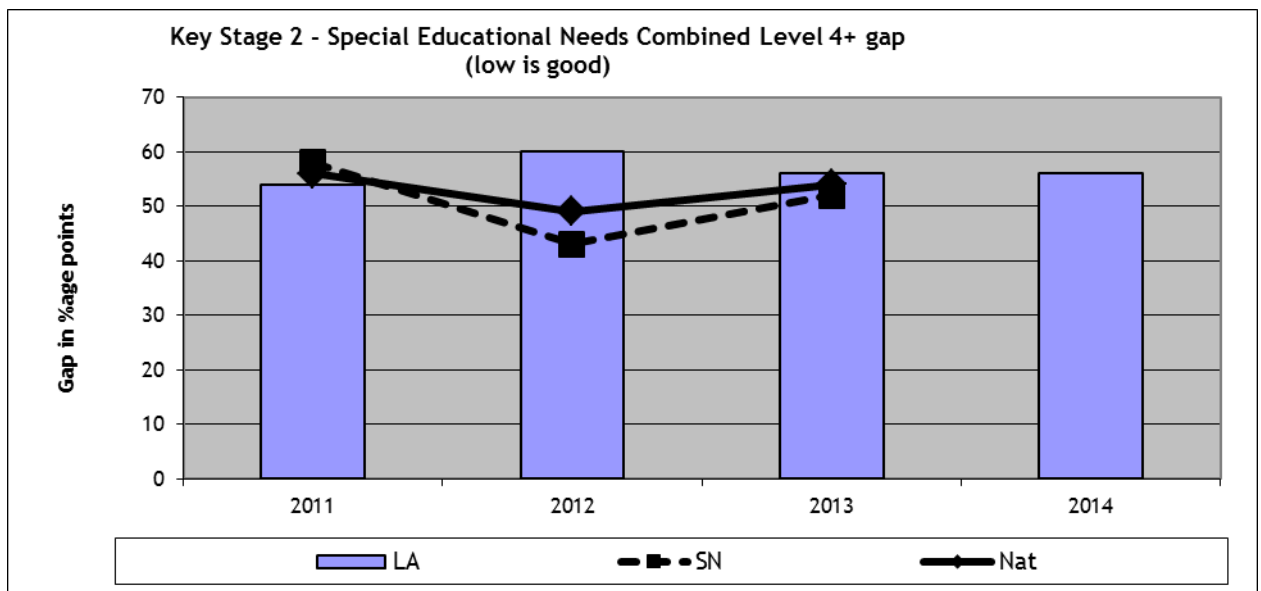
Reading Priority: Narrowing the Gap

- 4.20 A local priority for Reading has been to narrow the outcome gap for three particular groups of pupils: those eligible for Free School Meals; those with Special Educational Needs; and those from ethnic groups that are doing less well than the average in Reading.
- 4.21 The introduction of the Pupil Premium for families eligible for Free School Meals provides schools with direct funding which they are able to use to intervene for this group and make a difference. This has been widened to include families who have been eligible at any point in the six years of primary school, known as "Ever 6" and children of Service families. The local authority constantly monitors these groups.
- 4.22 In Reading we have identified in the past that there are three groups of children from BME communities who do less well than average. These pupils are of Pakistani, Black Caribbean and Mixed White Black Caribbean heritage. We are able to draw comparisons on a national level for these groups at Key Stage 2 however Key Stage 4 data is not currently available.
- 4.23 The following graph shows the Key Stage 2 gap between pupils eligible for Pupil Premium and those not eligible.

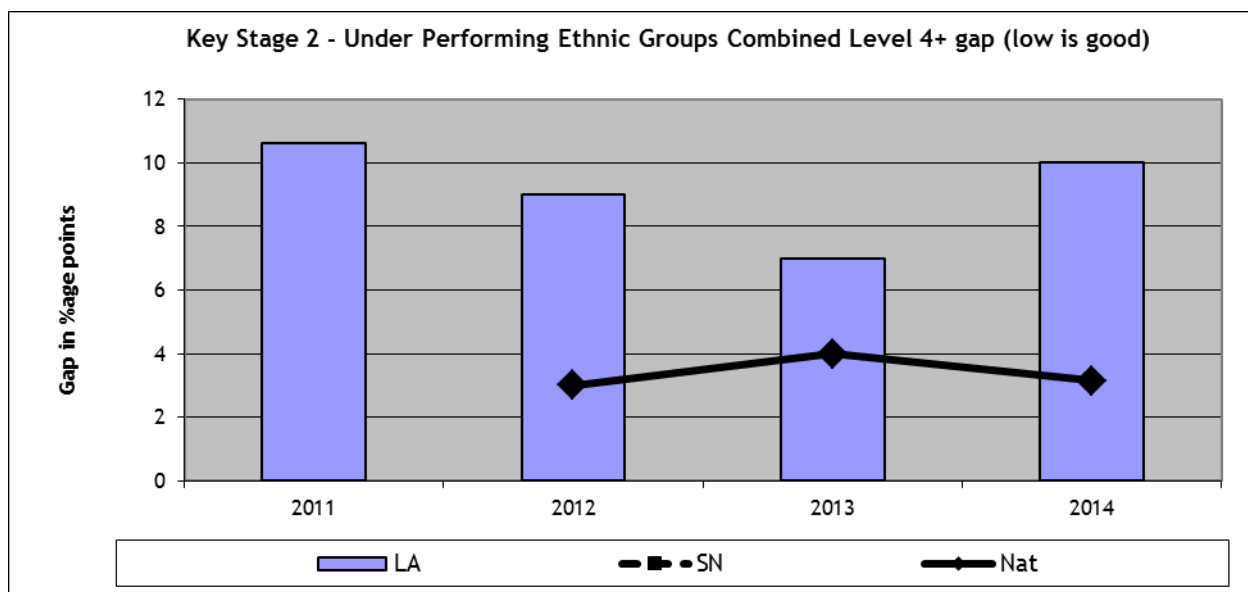


4.24 For the first time, this gap is lower than the national average which reflects that some schools are using the additional per pupil funding in an effective way. There is still a long way to go to secure even better results. The Local Authority team are working with schools to identify what will make a difference and the Landscape leadership conference on the 22nd January 2015 will be keynoted by Sir John Dunsford, the DFE’s Pupil Premium Champion. This focus will help all schools sharpen their focus in this area.

4.25 The following graph show the Key Stage 2 gap between pupils with Special Educational Needs and those without. There is no national comparison at this time, however the level of gap in Reading has not closed in 2013-14.

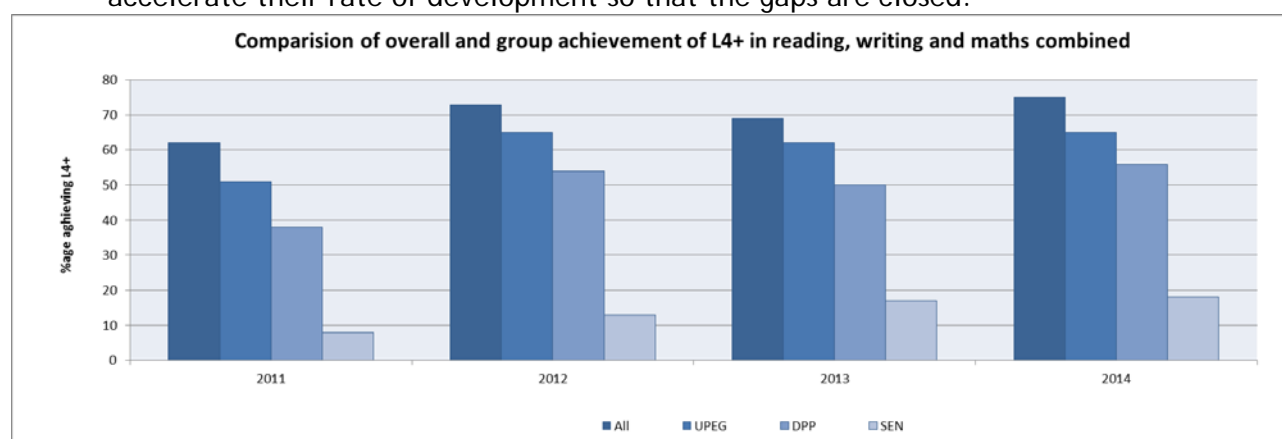


4.26 The following graph shows the Key Stage 2 gap between pupils from underperforming ethnic groups and their peers.



4.27 All schools who buy into the Local Authority data analysis team are provided with a detailed breakdown of this area for their school and are challenged by their School Partnership Advisor to explain how the school is addressing any shortfall and reflecting that in the school improvement plan and objectives. The widening of the gap in 2013-14 is disappointing and is not as well understood as we would expect. The education authority has invited Rosemary Campbell-Stephens to undertake an independent review of the education for pupils of black heritage in Reading, based on her national experience in this field. The review is expected to report its recommendations in spring 2015.

4.28 The following graph plots the absolute level of performance in each of the groups at Key stage 2 against the overall performance. It demonstrates that more young people each year in each group are reaching the national benchmark however we need to further accelerate their rate of development so that the gaps are closed.



5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 An effective education system is crucial to the success of Reading. It must be able to provide good quality education for our young people so they are skilled and ready to be economically active. The level of attainment is a nationally comparable measure of that readiness.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 It is a clear expectation of all schools that they assess, track and monitor pupil attainment and progress and Reading provides a comprehensive analysis of each schools performance.
- 6.2 Headteachers and Governors have been given regular briefings and updates relating to the national and local pictures and our performance in relation to our statistical neighbours the most recent of these was in September 2014.
- 6.3 For schools with the lowest performance, we have instigated a regular progress review process which brings the Headteacher, Chair of Governors, Head of Education and School Partnership Advisor together to review progress against a very specific, agreed plan. This process led to some notable improvements in 2013-14 and it will continue for 2014-15.
- 6.4 Members of this committee are undertaking an appreciate enquiry led scrutiny with local schools to explore the barriers and approached used by those that are most effective so that good practice can be celebrated and, where appropriate, a more joined up approach used to support families and pupils.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Section 4.20 to 4.28 details the focus on key gaps within the results for Reading. There is a fuller analysis which has been undertaken to confirm that these are still the right areas for Reading to focus on.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The increased numbers of schools not making the national benchmark in Key stage 2 could increase the pressure on the funds and resources available to make effective interventions. This funding comes from both the Local Authority budget and the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Effective expenditure will be routinely monitored by the Schools Forum.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 All statistics were compiled via data collected by all schools, including Academies, which is shared with the local authority under the terms of a data sharing agreement. The schools remain the data controller for their information and as such the local authority has not reported on individual schools in this report.
- 10.2 The allocation of resources and focus of the school improvement team is set out in the School Improvement Strategy which was refreshed in January 2013.