

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

TO:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	21 OCTOBER 2019	AGENDA ITEM:	16
TITLE:	SCHOOL STANDARDS AND ATTAINMENT: 2018/19 (UNVALIDATED)		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR A PEARCE	PORTFOLIO:	EDUCATION
SERVICE:	BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR CHILDREN	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report updates ACE on the 18/19 school standards/attainment figures in order for ACE to determine progress for children and young people in Reading Schools. The information on standards in this report is based on unvalidated data for academic year 2018/29. Validated data will be available later in this academic year. Therefore, some of the figures may change at individual school level, although we would not expect significant differences overall.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That members note the progress that has been made in raising standards across Reading Schools and thank teachers, support staff, governors children and their families for all their hard work.
- 2.2 That members continue to support the work of BFfC in raising standards in schools
- 2.3 That a further report be submitted to ACE Committee in 2020 when the validated data is available.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Children's Social Care, Early Help, Education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Services in Reading are delivered by Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC), a not-for-profit Company which is wholly owned by, but independent of, Reading Borough Council. As part of the services, BFfC support schools in raising standards.

3.2 In particular, the contract key performance indicators for BFfC (education) include:

- KPI 18: Reduction in secondary school fixed term exclusion
- KPI 19: Key Stage 2 results (Reading, Writing and Maths expected level+) gap in attainment for disadvantaged pupils.
- KPI20: Key Stage 4 results (Attainment 8) gap in attainment for disadvantaged pupils.

- KPI21: Increased percentage of schools rated good or outstanding (locally maintained only)

3.3 The responsibility to raise standards is a responsibility for everyone involved in the education service. In particular, whilst school leadership teams have responsibility for driving school improvement in their own school, the local authority can provide support and challenge to schools within its area and create the conditions for schools and their pupils to ‘thrive’. However, the Government has emphasised the importance of a ‘schools-led’ system where schools look to each other to develop system leadership, provide support and challenge, and, drive improvements in standards.

3.4 Part of this ‘schools led’ system is the growth of academies, free schools, and teaching school alliances. Such schools are funded directly from the DfE and are accountable to central rather than local government. This leaves local authorities with limited ability to influence, support and challenge schools other than locally maintained one.

3.5 The national increase in academies has been mirrored in Reading. In Reading the majority of secondary schools (all except Blessed Hugh Farringdon) are academies. As such, these schools have a ‘looser’ relationship with the local authority and there is no obligation on them to work in partnership with the authority.

3.6 Overall schools in Reading have been just below the national average for standards. In all key stages Reading continues to mirror the national position in terms of the gap in attainment between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children. Our work in Key Stages 1 and 2 continues to decrease the gap compared with England averages. Whilst at Key Stages 3 and 4, in some of our secondary schools, we have some of the best performance in the country, we also have a substantial proportion of young people leaving schools without the requisite skills for the world of further education and work. The majority of primary schools are good or outstanding, whilst at secondary the picture is more mixed.

3.7 Despite this there have been notable success in:

- School engagement on curriculum projects particularly:
 - Curriculum change
 - Oracy and writing
 - The Therapeutic Thinking approach and school to school support which has impacted on significant reductions in exclusions (bucking the national trend)

This report analyses Reading schools performance against the key education performance indicators for Brighter Futures for Children.

4. THE PROPOSAL

Members note the progress that has been made in raising standards across Reading schools and thank teachers, support staff, children and their families and governors for their hard work and continued commitment.

Members congratulate all schools achieving good or outstanding Ofsted ratings.

Members continue to support the work of BFfC in raising attainment and supporting Reading schools.

4.1 Current Position:

Current Position: Achievement against KPIs

(Please note all data sourced from the Local Authority interactive tool published by DfE)

KPI 18: Reduction in secondary school fixed term exclusion

Fixed term exclusions in Secondary schools are measured by rate (as a proportion of the schools population) and by number in the national tables. Data is published in August for the previous year. 18/ 19 figures will be available in August 2020.

	2015/16	2016/2017	2017/2018
Rate of Fixed term exclusions from secondary school England	Rate not published	9.4	10.13
Rate of Fixed term exclusions from Reading secondary schools	Rate not published	10.79	8.7
Number of fixed term exclusions from Reading secondary schools	1245	788	651

Between academic year 2015/16 and academic year 2017/2018 the number of fixed term exclusions has decreased significantly (nearly halved).

Between 2015/16 and 2017/18 the rate of fixed term exclusions in Reading secondary schools decreased compared to an increase in England. The rate of fixed term exclusions for 18/19 in Reading secondary schools is now below the England average.

We predict that there will be a marginal increase in the published number of fixed term exclusions in 2018/19 as 686 incidents were logged with the LA last year. Final figures will be available at the start of the academic year 2020/2021.

What worked:

Our work to influence schools' behaviour and inclusion policies has been very successful. We have shared training on Therapeutic Thinking with schools and colleges including nursery, primary, secondary, and special and higher education settings (such as Reading College). We have also provided briefings for Reading University's teacher trainees and all internal teams who support schools. We have attracted interest in this trauma informed approach from a number of neighbouring authorities. Brighter Futures are part of a national steering group for this approach where we are represented by our School Improvement Partner, Alice Boon.

51 schools have committed to the programme - out of 59 schools in Reading. We have trained over 120 senior tutors in schools and BFfC. We have also had a commitment from six schools to act as System Leaders, tasked with providing support and sharing innovation as part of our school to school approach.

Though the impact of training is hard to determine at this early stage, some provisional indicators have shown encouraging change. For example in primary schools the number of incidents of fixed term exclusion in 2018-19 decreased by 25% compared with the previous year and days lost to fixed term exclusion reduced by 33%. There were 2 primary permanent exclusions during this period compared to 6 in the previous year.

The number of fixed term exclusions for children entitled to Free School Meals decreased by 67% compared with the previous year and days lost reduced by 19%.

Fixed Term Exclusions for children with a statement also decreased by 6% compared with the previous year and days lost reduced by 11%.

With the intervention of the CME team, using Therapeutic Thinking strategies, an additional 20 reported exclusions were averted by finding supportive solutions in school.

- **KPI 19: Key Stage 2 results (Reading, Writing and Maths expected level+) gap in attainment for disadvantaged pupils.**

Key stage two results for 2019 are published as provisional in national tables. For 2018/19 this shows a small decrease in the attainment gap compared with the England national average. Our work is beginning to narrow the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged children.

% of children reaching the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths combined (RWM)		
	England All children	Reading All children
2018	65%	60%
2019	65%	62%

Children in Reading achieved below the national standard in both 2018 and 2019, however, combined results increased in Reading while the England average did not improve in 2018-19.

Boys in Reading were only 1% below the national average reflecting the focus and school improvement work done to improve outcomes for this group. Girls were 5% below national averages for their group in both years. The percentage of children attaining at the higher standard has been at the national average in 2017/18 and 2018/19.

	Reading % expected standard	Grammar, punctuation and spelling (GPS) % expected standard	Maths % expected standard	Writing % expected standard
England 2019	73	78	79	78
Reading 2019	71	77	77	76
Gap with national average	-2	-1	-2	-2
England 2018	76	78	76	79
Reading 2018	73	77	71	74
Gap with national average	-3	-1	-5	-5

Overall increases in attainment are closing the gap with national results and projects to boost attainment in Maths, writing, oracy and curriculum design have had impact not only at the end of key stages but also across key stages. Further work is still needed to raise attainment above national results.

Provisional 2019	Reading % expected standard	Maths % expected standard	Writing % expected standard	RWM combined % expected standard
National	73	79	78	65
LA maintained	73	79	78	64

primary schools				
Other primary schools	64	74	69	57

The gap between the attainment of disadvantaged children and those who are not disadvantaged has reduced over the last three years and is now close, at -23, to the national gap of -20. Though this indicates an improvement last year, we must remember that the gap means 52% of disadvantaged children are not 'secondary ready' at the end of KS2. This mirrors the national picture.

	Disadvantaged pupils % reaching expected standard in RWM	Not disadvantaged % reaching expected standard	Gap between disadvantaged children and not disadvantaged nationally
England provisional 2019	51	71	-20
2019 provisional unpublished Reading figures	48		-23
2018 published Reading	40	69	-31
2017 published Reading	41	67	-27

Looked after children were closely monitored and supported by the Virtual School. In 2018/19 there were 15 children in the cohort, 10 of whom were looked after for more than 12 months. 5 children attended Reading schools. 10 children had an identified special educational need, 6 of whom had an EHC Plan. Of the 5 children who did not have a special educational need, 3 achieved the standard in reading, writing and maths with one child working at greater depth and achieving the maximum scaled score of 120 in reading. The other two children achieved the standard in writing and maths and were just below the standard in reading.

What worked:

Results in locally maintained schools where Brighter Futures have more influence are improved in all areas and getting closer to the national average. Figures suggest that projects led by our teams are beginning to have an impact.

Other schools have a gap of -29%. We have offered inclusion in our projects to all schools at the same discounted costs and offer free pupil premium reviews to targeted schools. We collaborate beyond our borders with other Berkshire local authorities to bring national innovation and approaches into our schools and support system collaboration.

The impact of the Virtual School continues to bear fruit for children looked after. For such children, their performance is some of the best in the country. The strength of advocacy and the quality of leadership for these children is a key aspect of raising their attainment.

- **KPI20: Key Stage 4 results (Attainment 8) gap in attainment for disadvantaged pupils.**

The majority of secondary schools are academies and therefore Brighter Futures have a limited role. We are in touch with the Regional Schools Commissioner to raise concerns about attainment and to celebrate success in these schools where appropriate.

In addition, we have provided traded support on request through consultancy to locally maintained and academy secondary schools.

Published results 2017/18	Attainment 8 2018	Progress 8 2018	% English and Maths GCSE grade 9-5 2018	% English and Maths GCSE grade 9-4 2018 disadvantaged	% English and Maths GCSE grade 9-4 2018 not-disadvantaged	Gap
England	44.5	-0.02	40	44.6	71.7	-27.1
Reading	49.0	-0.04	46.5	35	69	-36.7

Though attainment eight is above the national average there is significant variation in outcomes between Reading secondary schools.

Disadvantaged results are of concern. Only 35% of disadvantaged children leave school in Reading with good enough results in their GCSEs to give them access to further education, employment and training.

Published results for 2019 will not be available until later in the year and though some schools have reported their top level results these are provided without context and are subject to significant change. These headline figures for Reading schools are as follows:

Attainment 8	% English and Maths GCSE grade 9-4 2018	% English and Maths GCSE grade 9-5 2018
51	65%	53%

Results for this year should not be compared to previous years as new GCSE specifications have been introduced.

The Virtual School team closely supported and monitored looked after children at the end of KS4. There were thirty two children in this cohort, twenty one of whom had been looked after for more than twelve months. Four children attended Reading schools. Twenty three children had an identified special educational need, fifteen of whom had an EHC Plan. There were three unaccompanied asylum seeking young people, one of whom attained an A grade in Persian. Of the remaining five young people, four attained between five to ten passes at GCSE/BTEC level, one of whom attained a level nine in French.

Results for 'A' Levels were issued on 15 August 2019. We predict that Reading schools will have mirrored the national picture with a small decline at the higher grades A*-Bs. Overall 98% of pupils gained a pass. The full validated results will be available later in the year.

The Virtual School reports that 56% of its students are engaged in further education and training. A growing number of children are gaining university places.

Anne Longfield, the Children's Commissioner for England, has published research looking at the number of children who leave the education system at 18 without reaching Level 2 attainment (five GCSEs grade 4-9, or equivalent technical qualifications

Her report highlights the issue of a 25% increase since 2015, in children entitled to free school meals leaving at 19 without 5 GCSEs. This increases to 31% when English

and Maths at grade 4 are included. In 2018 in Reading the number leaving at 19 without five GCSEs including English and Maths increased by 43% to 46.3%.

For the academic year ending 2018 disadvantaged children in Reading were 2.3 times more likely to leave school without GCSE English and Maths at a grade 4+ than their more affluent peers. This means that 6.5 out of 10 disadvantaged children leave at 19 without the qualifications they need, nationally this is 6 in 10.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are 2.6 times more likely than their peers without SEND to leave without English and Maths GCSE. That is 6 in 10 of Reading children. Nationally this figure is 7 in 10 suggesting that Reading schools do better than other areas of England in this respect.

- **KPI21: Increased percentage of schools rated good or outstanding (locally maintained only)**

Nearly all locally maintained schools are rated good or outstanding. In January 2019 77% of Reading pupils were educated in Good or better schools. By July 2019 this had risen to 85% of Reading pupils.

Since December 2018 the following inspection judgements have been awarded to Reading schools:

- December 2018: Oxford Road (LA maintained) - Good again- tariff reduced as inspectors thought it likely the school would be Outstanding under the last framework
- January 2019 :Ranikhet Academy - Special Measures
- March 2019:Holybrook (LA maintained) - Good again
- May 2019: Battle Academy - Good - previously Requires Improvement, New Town Academy (MAT buy back support for school improvement from BfC) - Good previously Requires Improvement
- June 2019: Prospect School Academy- Requires Improvement again, The Ridgeway (LA maintained) - Good previously Requires Improvement, Phoenix College (LA maintained) monitoring visit , making good progress towards the removal of special measures
- July 2019: St Anne's RC Primary (Vol aided) - Good again, Micklands Primary (LA maintained) - Good again, Caversham Primary (LA maintained) - piloted new section 8 inspection framework - very positive outcomes but no grading awarded for pilot, Emmer Green Primary (LA maintained) - piloted new section 5 inspection framework - very positive outcomes but no grading awarded for pilot

The table below shows the current position of Reading schools as of July 2019.

Locally maintained Schools	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Special Measures	No grade
Nursery (5)	5 (100%)	0	0	0	0
Primary (27)	3 (11%)	22 (82%)	2 (7%)	0	0
Secondary (1)	0	1(100%)	0	0	0
Special/ PRU (3)	0	2 (67%)	0	1 (33%)	0
% good or better	92%				
Not locally maintained	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Special Measures	No grade
Nursery (0)	0	0	0	0	0
Primary (12)	3 (25%)	6 (50%)	2 (17%)	0	1 (8%)
Secondary (9)	3 (33%)	3 (33%)	2 (22%)	0	1 (12%)
Special/ PRU (2)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	0	0	0
% good or better	85%				

better					
LA Sept 19 (59)	15	35	6	1	2

What worked:

Our Senior School Standards Officer Mo Galway is a Lead Inspector for Ofsted and brings much of her knowledge and expertise to the strategic work undertaken by the team with local schools.

A new education inspection framework has been introduced from September 2019. This significantly changes the way schools are inspected and the criteria they are judged on. Brighter Futures have been working with schools for the last year to prepare them for the change and are focusing support this term on schools expecting an inspection in 2019/20.

The new framework is likely to lead to some changes in the grading of schools. Schools which are currently outstanding may be judged 'good' in the new framework, whilst some 'good' schools may find themselves judged 'requires improvement'.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 Brighter Futures work with schools, children and and young people contributes in the following way to the Council's Corporate Plan priorities:

1. Securing the economic success of Reading and provision of job opportunities
Our work to improve key stage 4 results are specifically focused on ensuring children and young people leave school equipped to take advantage of the local job market
2. Ensuring access to decent housing to meet local needs
Not applicable
3. To protect and enhance the lives of vulnerable adults and children
The work of the Virtual School specifically focuses on ensuring vulnerable children achieve at school in readiness for their transition to adulthood.
4. Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe
Not applicable although our work on climate change and supporting teachers to teach this area will contribute indirectly to this priority.
5. Ensuring that there are good education, leisure and cultural opportunities for people in Reading
Our work supporting locally maintained schools has meant more Reading children and young people have access to a good or outstanding school.
6. Ensuring the Council is fit for the future
Not applicable.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 *The education work of Brighter Futures for Children is funded through the Direct Schools Grant and is agreed annually by the Schools Forum.*

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Local Authority Interactive Tool:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-interactive-tool-lait>