

Committee	Dated:
Community and Children's Services	13 January 2017
Subject: Annual Report on Learning and Achievement	Public
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Summary

This annual report provides members with an overview of learning and achievement of primary aged pupils in the City of London during the 2015/16 education year. The cohort reported on includes all the children at Sir John Cass, with the City resident pupils reported as a distinct group within this, the City residents at Prior Western Primary School and City residents attending other Islington Primary schools.

Comparisons between 2015/16 performance and previous years is problematic this year as the Department for Education introduced a new and complex regime of performance measurement during 2016 which does not mirror measures from previous years. This report spans the new and old methods of measurement so commentary is provided to guide Members when the raw data invites misleading conclusions. It is also important to remember that the number of children being measured at each school is very small so 'slight dips' in performance can be caused by a single child performing poorly on a single day. Lastly, members will be aware that the changes in tests for primary phase pupils attracted considerable media attention and criticism for being far too hard and causing unnecessary pressure and stress for the children.

Overall, the performance of children at Sir John Cass remains very positive. Results show significant improvement in some areas such as in phonics screening compared to the previous year and a marked improvement (a rise from 50% to 90%) over the last two years. The number of children achieving a good stage of development at Early Years Foundation Stage is lower than in previous years but this is because of the makeup of the group which has a high number of children with additional needs. Outcomes at Key stage 1 followed the national trend of being lower this year but in Key Stage 2 in the combined reading, writing and mathematics, 89% of Sir John Cass's pupils met the expected standard, compared to just over half of pupils nationally (53%). Mathematics rose to 100%, writing was stable and reading dipped only slightly.

At Prior Western school, City of London pupil's performance was also extremely positive for 2015/16. The Early Years Foundation Stage had a higher statistical

score than Sir John Cass but the phonics screening showed a slightly lower score than Sir John Cass and a slight dip from previous years. At Key Stage 1, there was a slight dip in reading results but an improvement in Maths and Writing. Key stage 2 results are more volatile, and showing a drop in performance in reading writing and maths.

The national format for reporting school performance has changed during the year. This makes comparing performance to previous years rather contrived and potentially misleading. A new format for reporting is being considered for the 2016-17 annual report which gathers data in a more meaningful local context and which references a broader range of City of London children, including secondary age children.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The Education and Early Years Service reports on the attainment and achievement of primary phase pupils annually. Intensive mapping work by the service during 2016 has established that City of London children attend a large number of schools both in the maintained and independent sector. Over two thirds of City resident children attend schools outside the City boundary and emerging figures point to over half attending schools within the independent sector.
2. This report focuses on the progress of pupils at the two most popular schools for primary aged children, Sir John Cass Foundation Primary School, the City of London's only maintained school, and Prior Western School, an Islington primary school located close to the City's boundary. The report provides information for the 2015/16 education year and it should be noted that;
 - a. Results for 2015/16 are as yet unvalidated by the DfE and
 - b. Schools are already well into the 2016/17 education year at the time of reporting 2015/16 performance to Members
3. Whilst it is essential to monitor and report on the educational progress of City of London children, it is important to note that the numbers of children in each reported cohort are very small. Therefore a far greater volatility in trend data for the cohort can be created by the performance of very small number of children, creating sharp spikes and troughs in individual graphs.

4. The terms School Action and School Action Plus have been replaced by the single term 'SEN Support'.

Current Position

5. Early Years Foundation Stage results were very high in the 2014/15 year, but were slightly lower in the 2015/16 education year, reflecting a number of children in this cohort who have additional learning needs. Given their relative starting points, the 2015/16 early years cohort of children at Sir John Cass performed exceptionally well.
6. In the phonics screening check, outcomes (a test in which pupils read 40 words aloud) for Year 1 children improved again during the 2015/16 year, exceeding Inner London and England averages
7. Nationally, Key Stage 1 outcomes against the new expected standard were more volatile; with a national drop, particularly in reading and mathematics, also seen locally. Writing assessments remained stable. The Department of Education has cautioned against placing too much importance on direct comparisons with previous years as the new measures do not match exactly.
8. The City of London retained the top spot in the country for the headline measure at Key Stage 2 in the combined reading, writing and mathematics, 89% of Sir John Cass's pupils met the expected standard, compared to just over half of pupils nationally (53%). Mathematics rose to 100%, writing was stable and reading dipped only slightly.
9. There was less exceptional performance than the previous Level 5 high achievers in all three subjects both locally and nationally. Performance for Sir John Cass's School was similar to national levels.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

10. The 2015/16 cohort of primary aged City resident pupils has performed highly for another year. It is important to note that Sir John Cass school benefits from a relatively high level of funding and compared to other London schools. It is also one of the small number of 1Form Entry schools in the Country, a significant number of whom are struggling to maintain quality due to the financial unviability of the 1FE model.

Financial Implications

11. The City of London is expecting an announcement on future funding levels under the government's National Fair Funding Formula, which seeks to redistribute school funding more evenly amongst the lowest and highest funded schools. It is likely that the settlement with the City of London and consequently Sir John Cass will be lower than previous funding levels, though the extent of the reduction is not yet known. Depending on the pace of change and the extent of reduction, this may increase the risk to the quality of provision in future years.

Conclusion

12. As far as it is currently captured, the educational outcomes for City of London children are very positive. New understanding of the distribution of City of London children in schools is developing and at the same time the government has changed its methods of measuring children's performance. This will require us to report performance differently in the future in order to provide a more comprehensive and balanced picture of outcomes.

13. In the meantime, officers will report to Members the outcome of the financial settlement for the City of London, including a risk management strategy as appropriate.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Primary Education in The City of London, Annual Report 2016

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