

## Cabinet 24 March 2014

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8 <b>NARROWING THE GAP SCRUTINY INQUIRY</b> Cabinet is invited to consider the attached recommendations from the Education, Skills and Children's Services Select Committee.	1 - 4



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## Cabinet Response: Narrowing the Gap

**Select Committee Chairmen:** Val Letheren  
**Leader Scrutiny Officer:** Michael Carr  
**Date reported to Cabinet:** 17 March 2014  
**Lead Cabinet Member:** Mike Appleyard  
**Lead Officer:** Chris Munday

Recommendation	Agreed Yes/No	Cabinet Response including proposed action	Responsible Cabinet Member	Responsible Officer(s)	Action by date
<b>Recommendation One: Targeting Economically Disadvantaged Communities</b> We recommend that the Cabinet Member ask the Bucks Learning Trust to explore the feasibility of establishing Learning Development Centres to offer targeted learning opportunities for parents and children. These centres should be located in areas accessible to economically disadvantaged families.	In part	This is a commissioning responsibility which remains with the County Council. The Cabinet Member will explore the approach used at Learning Development Centres and consider how the benefits could be delivered locally within existing resources.	Mike Appleyard	Chris Munday	December 2014
<b>Recommendation Two: The Early Years Curriculum</b> In order to promote the Early Years Curriculum, we recommend that the Council pro-actively supports the implementation of Development Matters, Early Years Outcomes, and the new Early Learning Goals for all Early Years providers in Buckinghamshire	Yes	The Council is committed to promoting the Early Years Curriculum and is already actively involved in supporting its implementation. Progress will be reported in the Annual Standards Report.	Mike Appleyard	Amanda Taylor-Hopkins	September 2014
<b>Recommendation Three: Children's Centres Review</b> We recommend that the planned review of Buckinghamshire Children's Centres focus on a) accessibility and take-up of services by deprived	Yes	The review of Children's Centres is currently underway and includes a focus on the three areas suggested. The outcome of the review will be reported by September 2014.	Mike Appleyard	Ben Thomas	September 2014

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parents and children, b) the location of centres in their role as early intervention hubs, and c) the links between schools and centres.					
<p><b>Recommendation Four: An Early Years Pupil Premium</b></p> <p>We recommend that the Schools Forum review the Funding Formula with the objective of targeting additional funding at the children of families from the most deprived backgrounds, in order to assist early years providers to achieve the Government's Early Years Outcomes and the 17 Early Learning Goals.</p>	Yes	The Council has protected funding for early years with the support of the Schools Forum. We have recently agreed a cut to the School's budget to offset cuts from central Government. We already fund for deprivation and we will review, with the Schools' Forum, whether a pupil premium approach will be more effective. The review will take place between September 2014 and April 2015.	Mike Appleyard	Chris Munday	April 2015
<p><b>Recommendation Five: Improving Literacy</b></p> <p>We recommend that the Cabinet Member undertake a review on how to improve the performance of phonics and to consider methods to achieve higher levels of literacy for deprived pupils at early years and primary school levels.</p>	In part	<p>The Council is responsible for overall standards in our schools and is committed to ensuring that we maintain and build on our successes. We consider that phonics should be taught as part of a range of strategies to support literacy within our schools in line with the Rose Review findings.</p> <p>The Service Director is already holding discussions with a range of schools on literacy (including the teaching of phonics) to develop the future commissioning of the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust in this area. We will report on the outcome of these discussions in November 2014.</p>	Mike Appleyard	Chris Munday	November 2014
<p><b>Recommendation Six: The Role of Parents in Education</b></p> <p>We recommend that the Cabinet Member develop a programme to engage and further involve parents in the education of their children, with a particular focus on supporting parents of the most vulnerable children.</p>	In part	The Cabinet Member is committed to ensuring that the Council supports parents in supporting their vulnerable children in education, and funding is already used to support this work in Buckinghamshire. The Cabinet Member will review existing arrangements through its review of the Parenting Strategy.	Mike Appleyard	Ben Thomas	April 2015

<p><b>Recommendation Seven: High Achieving Economically Disadvantaged</b>  We recommend that the Cabinet Member encourage Buckinghamshire primary schools to provide targeted learning support in order to enable high achieving pupils from deprived background to access grammar schools.</p>	In part	The Cabinet member is committed to ensuring that high achieving children who are economically disadvantaged perform well in all school settings not just Grammar Schools. The Council has commissioned the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust to pilot targeted learning support for children with high prior attainment to ensure they reach their potential The pilot project will be in place in September 2014.	Mike Appleyard	Amanda Taylor-Hopkins	September 2014
<p><b>Recommendation Eight: An Analysis and Challenge Toolkit for Schools</b>  We recommend that the Cabinet Member ask the Bucks Learning Trust to develop guidance and online toolkits for schools on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• project identification and assessment of educational programmes and interventions targeted at the needs of pupils most in need, and</li> <li>• an evaluation framework template as a practical tool for assessing the impact of narrowing the gap projects.</li> </ul>	In part	The Cabinet Member supports the use of evidence bases, although does not consider it appropriate to develop new guidance and on-line toolkits. We will ask the Learning Trust to enable on-line access to existing tools from the Sutton Trust and other organisations by September 2014.	Mike Appleyard	Amanda Taylor-Hopkins	September 2014
<p><b>Recommendation Nine: Researching and Evaluating what Works</b>  We recommend that the Cabinet Member apply to the Education Endowment Foundation for funding to undertake an independent peer review of narrowing the gap projects in Buckinghamshire and that this report be shared for best practice.</p>	Yes	The Cabinet Member will ask Buckinghamshire Learning Trust to apply for the funding.	Mike Appleyard	Amanda Taylor-Hopkins	September 2014
<p><b>Recommendation Ten: Narrowing the Gap Reports to Governing Bodies</b>  We recommend that the Cabinet Member ask the Bucks Learning Trust to develop guidance for schools on the roles of governors in developing</p>	Yes	We agree that Governing Bodies have a critical role to play in supporting and challenging schools in the way they tackle this agenda. We have carried out an extensive programme of training for governing bodies on the pupil	Mike Appleyard	Amanda Taylor-Hopkins	September 2014

and implementing narrowing the gap projects, and evaluation of the effects of the Pupil Premium. This should include quarterly/annual reports on these topics to governing body meetings.		premium in 2013 – 2014 and will include further dates in our Governor Development Programme for the academic year 2014 – 2015. In addition, model governing body agendas set out an expectation for governors to monitor use of the Pupil Premium on a termly basis through the report of the pupil premium governor or relevant committee.			
<b>Recommendation Eleven: Lead Governor for Narrowing the Gap</b> In order to raise the profile of narrowing the gap within schools, we recommend that school governing bodies consider appointing a lead governor with special responsibility for narrowing the gap and Pupil Premium.	Yes	A number of school governing bodies have appointed governors with a specific responsibility for pupil premium. We will continue to encourage all governing bodies to consider this.	Mike Appleyard	Amanda Taylor-Hopkins	September 2014
<b>Recommendation Twelve: Narrowing the Gap Training for School Leaders</b> We recommend that the Cabinet Member ask the Bucks Learning Trust to enhance training opportunities for school leaders on maximising narrowing the gap projects and Pupil Premium including strategic overview, project identification and budget allocation, mid-term review, and evaluation and assessment.	Yes	We will ask the Bucks Learning Trust to report on this training as part of their annual report to the Council.	Mike Appleyard	Amanda Taylor-Hopkins	September 2014