



# Buckinghamshire County Council Select Committee

Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee

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## Report to the Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee

<b>Title:</b>	Narrowing the Gap Inquiry. Recommendations Update
<b>Committee date:</b>	Tuesday 6 December 2016
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<b>Cabinet Member sign-off:</b>	Zahir Mohammed, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

### Purpose of Agenda Item

Information: Relating to recommendations contained in the Narrowing the Gap report to the Select Committee, published 14<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

### Background

This report provides an update on actions relating to the twelve recommendations of the 2014 Select Committee report. The Committee had conducted an in-depth enquiry into the gap between economically disadvantaged pupils and others in Buckinghamshire. The report was conducted to support the Council priority to reduce underachievement. *"In the Education and Skills Strategic priorities 2013-17, the Council aims to help children and young people reach their full potential by narrowing the achievement gap between the highest and lowest achieving pupils so that more children have reached a good level of development by the age of five and fewer underperform through their school years. Reflecting this priority, the Education, Skills and Children's Services Select Committee decided to undertake an Inquiry into this issue in 2013..."* Narrowing the Gap report 18 Feb 2014 p.7

Members interviewed a wide range of expert witnesses and local stakeholders, and engaged with all schools through the Bucks Association of Head Teachers (BASH) and the Primary Executive Board (PEB), as well as inviting schools to submit evidence through a questionnaire survey on how schools are narrowing the gap.



As described in the introduction to the original report, the 'gap' is that between the educational achievement of pupils eligible for pupil premium and all others. Pupil premium funding is allocated to schools for pupils who have been registered for free school meals at any point in the last six years and those who have been looked after for more than six months. Since the original report, pupils adopted from care have also been included in pupil premium. Children of service personnel are also eligible for pupil premium but are not included in published data.

## Summary

The gap is a national issue and an issue in Buckinghamshire too. Data (below), as presented to the Select Committee in the 2015 Education Standards Report, shows gaps have narrowed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP), Year 1 Phonics Screening Check and at Key Stage 4. However, at Key Stage 1 and 2, results have been more variable and there is no clear trend of improvement. At all Key Stages, gaps have remained wider than national.

Statistical Neighbours' information is available only at the end of KS2 and KS4.

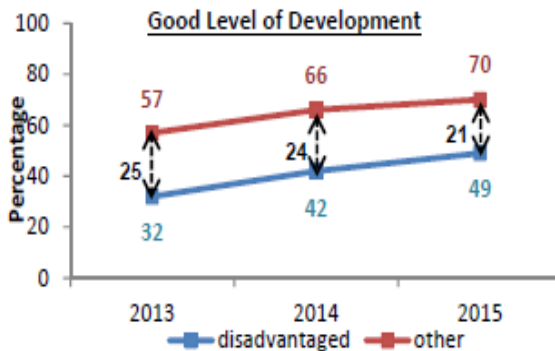
- At the end of KS 2, at level 4+ reading, writing and mathematics in 2015, results of Buckinghamshire disadvantaged pupils were below average (7<sup>th</sup> out of 11) of the eleven Statistical Neighbours, and the gap was the third widest.
- At the end of KS4, at 5+A\*-C inc. English and mathematics, results of disadvantaged pupils in 2015 were above average (4<sup>th</sup> out of 11) of the Statistical Neighbours group. However, as the results for non-disadvantaged pupils were the highest of the group, the in-county gap was the widest.

The Department of Education has not yet published 2016 data for disadvantaged pupils, so this report considers 2015 data where national comparators are available. 2016 results will be published later in the year in the annual Education Standards Report.

A key strategy to 'narrow the gap' has been on improving disadvantaged pupils' results in the Early Years in keeping with research by the Sutton Trust. For EYFSP and Year 1 Phonics, where trend data is available, internal analysis suggests that the gap between disadvantaged pupils and others within Buckinghamshire has narrowed further in 2016.

## Buckinghamshire 2015 Gap Data

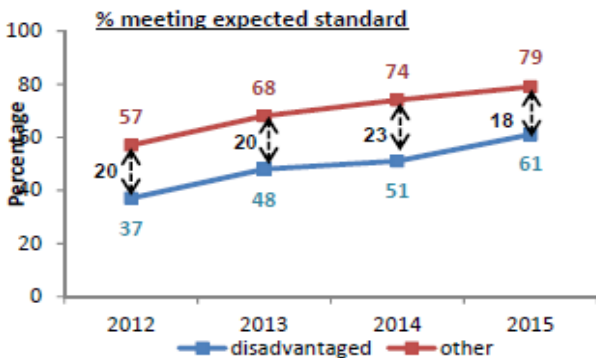
### Early Years Foundation Stage Profile



The gap between the percentage of disadvantaged pupils and others in Buckinghamshire reaching a good level of development at the end of the EYFS has narrowed from 24 percentage points in 2014 to 21 percentage points in 2015.

Data is currently not available for the performance of disadvantaged pupils nationally.

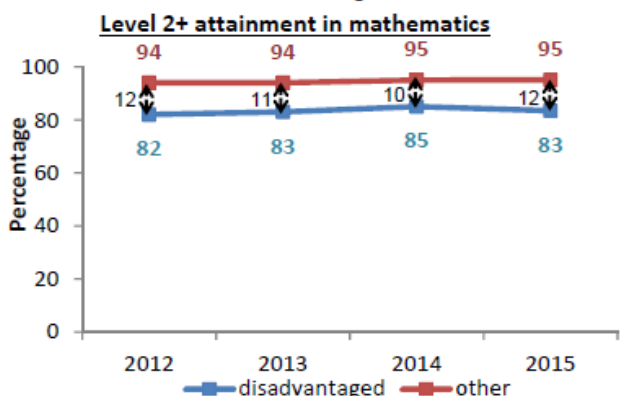
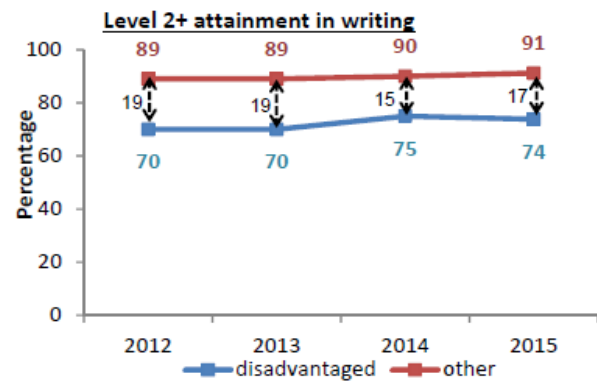
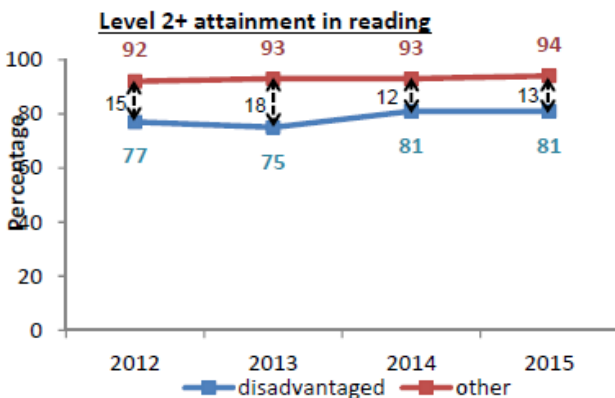
### Year One Phonics Screening Check Results



The percentage of all pupils reaching the expected standard has risen and in 2015 was the same as national. The gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others in Year 1 phonics in Buckinghamshire has narrowed from 23 percentage points in 2014 to 18 percentage points in 2015.

Nationally the gap is smaller than in Buckinghamshire. The current national gap is 14 percentage points.

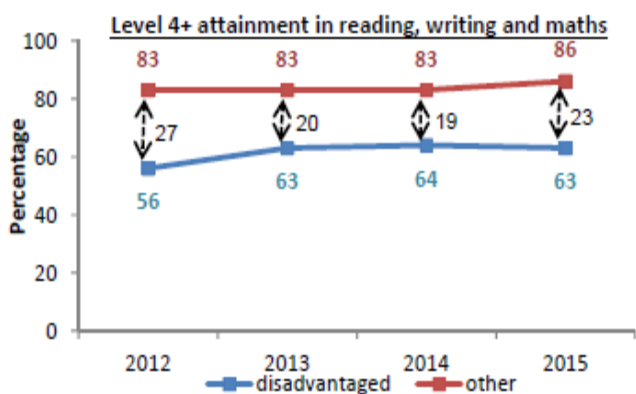
### Key Stage 1 National Curriculum Assessment Results



The gap between the attainment at level 2 or above of disadvantaged pupils and others in Buckinghamshire decreased in 2014, but has increased again in 2015. The gap for reading has increased by 1 percentage point to 13 percentage points. The gaps for writing and mathematics have both increased by 2 percentage points, to 17 percentage points and 12 percentage points respectively.

Nationally the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others is smaller than in Buckinghamshire for all 3 subjects. There has only been improvement in the reading gap nationally, with the gaps for writing and mathematics staying static. National gaps are 9 percentage points for reading, 12 percentage points for writing and 8 percentage points for mathematics.

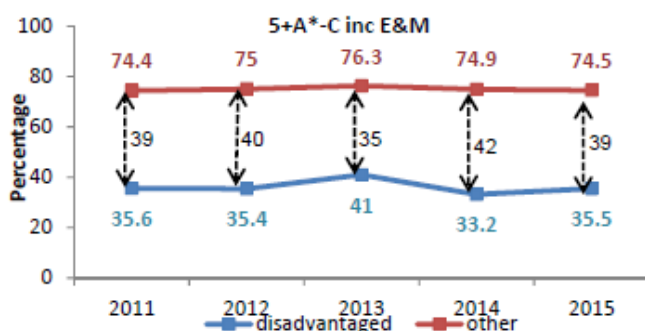
### Key Stage 2 National Curriculum Assessment Results



At Key Stage 2, the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others in Buckinghamshire decreased each year until 2014, but has increased again in 2015. The gap is 23 percentage points.

Nationally the gap is smaller (15 percentage points in 2015).

### Key Stage 4 (GCSE and equivalent) Results



The gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others in Buckinghamshire at KS4 has narrowed, decreasing from 42 percentage points in 2014 to 39 percentage points in 2015, because of improved results of disadvantaged pupils.

Nationally the gap is smaller than in Buckinghamshire. The current national gap is 28 percentage points, which increased by 1 percentage point this year

### **Changes to 2016 Measurement**

- As reported in the Education Standards Report in May, 2015 was the last year that KS1 and KS2 assessments were reported in levels. Secondary measures will also change. In 2016 we will not be able to report on trends, as 2016 data will not be comparable to 2015.
- The DfE has announced that: “In 2016, the primary/secondary performance tables will not include measures of *in-school performance gaps* between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils at the school. The tables will still include measures that report the difference between *disadvantaged pupils at the school and other pupils nationally* as the most appropriate basis on which to judge schools/ performance. Focusing on in-school gaps risks setting limits on the ability of all pupils to achieve to

their full potential, including those identified as disadvantaged.” (DfE Performance Tables - Statement of Intent)

- It is assumed that the same approach will be taken when national and local authority results are published.
- Ofsted now use the terminology of “**diminishing the difference**” rather than “narrowing the gap.”

## Summary of Recommendations, Update and Measurable Impact on the Gap

Progress against each of the recommendations is summarised in the table below. For more information on each of the recommendations and impact, where measurable, please see the detail provided in Appendix 1.

Some of the interventions arising from recommendations in this report have short term measurable outcomes (recommendations 2, 5 and 6). These projects have directly increased results of disadvantaged pupils in participating settings or schools.

Other recommendations relate to changing the broader culture (recommendations 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12). These are essential given the widespread distribution of disadvantaged pupils; many schools have only a small number. Without these changes, extending projects to wider groups of schools would not be possible. However, impact is longer term and more difficult to measure.

Finally, a third group focuses on providing services to support disadvantaged pupils and others in a more challenging economic climate (recommendations 1, 3, and 4). The impact on attainment results is also difficult to measure.

Recommendation and Update	Page (Appendix 1)
<p><b>1. Learning Development Centres</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During 2015-6 academic year, 810 students in total accessed a variety of Matrix programmes both at the centre and in schools.</li> <li>• 274 (235 primary students) attended the school study support provision.</li> <li>• 96% of students said they felt more confident as learners.</li> <li>• <b>Impact on the gap</b> – long term and not directly measurable through attainment results</li> </ul>	1
<p><b>2. The Early Years' Curriculum</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The BLT has supported the Early Years' curriculum for disadvantaged pupils in a range of ways, including the following projects: The Early Language Development Programme (ELDP), Improving outcomes project and the Home Learning Matters project</li> <li>• <b>Impact on the gap</b> - The gap in Early Years reduced from 24% in 2014 to 21% in 2015.</li> </ul>	3
<p><b>3. Children's Centre review</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From September 2014 six centres were developed into Early Years Excellence Hubs.</li> <li>• The remaining centres were recommissioned to Spurgeons and Action for Children</li> <li>• In the first 10 months (to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016) engagement with funded 2 year olds increased from 14% to 38.6% and the number of target families being supported increased from 305 to 452</li> <li>• <b>Impact on the gap</b> - long term and not directly measurable through attainment results</li> </ul>	6

<b>4. An Early Years Pupil Premium</b>	<b>8</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since the implementation of the EYPP in April 2015, there have been approximately 800 successful applications (including Looked After Children)</li> <li>• Payment has been made to the relevant Early Years Providers to enable them to better support the children found to be eligible and applications continue to arrive on a regular basis</li> <li>• <b>Impact on the gap</b> – long term and not directly measurable through attainment results</li> </ul>	
<b>5. Improving literacy</b>	<b>10</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The BLT identified schools where gaps between disadvantaged and other pupils were high for the phonics screening check and put in place intervention specifically targeted towards reducing the difference</li> <li>• <b>Impact on the gap</b> - The gap in phonics attainment reduced from 23% in 2014 to 18% in 2015</li> </ul>	
<b>6. The role of parents in education</b>	<b>13</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work in this area has been focused in three key areas; the work of the Family Resilience Service and Early Help panels, the Home Learning Matters project and working in collaboration with the Community Consultative Group which aims to raising the achievement of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) children and young people who are not reaching their full potential</li> <li>• <b>Impact on the gap</b> - The Home Learning Matters project has a measurable outcome. This project was initiated in 25 schools which saw an average 30% increase in the number of children performing at age expected levels.</li> </ul>	
<b>7. High achieving, economically disadvantaged</b>	<b>18</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The BLT has funded a project during 2015/6 entitled “Widening Participation” aimed at encouraging and funding Grammar Schools to support disadvantaged pupils in local Primary schools</li> <li>• Pupil Premium reviews and Pupil Premium Network Meetings, established by the BLT, have provided opportunities to consider provision for the full range of disadvantaged learners in the county, including the most able</li> <li>• <b>Impact on the gap</b> – Widening Participation Project will have a measurable impact, but data is not yet available</li> </ul>	
<b>8. An analysis and challenge toolkit for schools</b>	<b>20</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The BLT have promoted and shared existing toolkits from both the Sutton Trust and the Essex Toolkit and have supported schools to analyse interventions and challenge progress</li> <li>• The BLT produced Learning Tracks for English, maths and science to assist schools in assessing pupils against age related expectations within the national curriculum</li> <li>• <b>Impact on the gap</b> –not directly measurable through attainment results</li> </ul>	

<b>9. Researching and evaluating what works</b>	<b>23</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researching what works for disadvantaged pupils in Buckinghamshire is of pivotal importance in all narrowing the gap projects and work, such as the Pupil Premium Action Group and the Wycombe Standards Project</li> <li>• Pupil Premium Reviews, advisory visits and training continue to have a strong focus on development of strategies based on evidence of good practice in other schools and research</li> <li>• <b>Impact on the gap</b> –not directly measurable through attainment results</li> </ul>	
<b>10. Narrowing the gap reports to governing bodies</b>	<b>26</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Governor Services team at the BLT have heavily promoted the use of a narrowing the gap report to governing bodies</li> <li>• Model agendas for committees, terms of reference for committees, reports, guidance for governing bodies and audit toolkits have all been developed and regularly communicated</li> <li>• <b>Impact on the gap</b> - not directly measurable through attainment results</li> </ul>	
<b>11. Lead governor for narrowing the gap</b>	<b>28</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The BLT recommends the appointment of a designated NtG/Pupil Premium governor</li> <li>• Records indicate that 102 (44%) governing boards in Buckinghamshire currently have a designated NtG governor with the rest choosing to have the responsibility sitting at committee level</li> <li>• As a result of this increased level of discussion, monitoring and accountability, there is now much more clarity about the way in which PP funding is applied, how effective different strategies may be, and the measurable impact of work</li> <li>• <b>Impact on the gap</b> - not directly measurable through attainment results</li> </ul>	
<b>12. Narrowing the gap training for school leaders</b>	<b>30</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training opportunities for senior and middle leaders are a high priority</li> <li>• Examples of training for school leaders include; a Primary and Secondary Leader Pupil Premium conference, training opportunities for Head teachers, the establishment of Pupil Premium network groups and Governor training</li> <li>• <b>Impact on the gap</b> - not directly measurable through attainment results</li> </ul>	

### Next Steps

Diminishing the differences between disadvantaged pupils and all others remains a high priority. In 2016-17, the BLT are increasing the support and challenge to all our schools and taking the necessary steps, based on evidence based practice, to raise expectations and attainment.

*Appendix 2* - details how research based initiatives are being taken forward through networking, school to school support, wider training, data analysis and specific projects.



*Appendix 3* - details a Multi-Agency Diminishing the Difference Project being implemented by the BLT which will broaden the approach to diminishing the difference outside school, encompassing agencies supporting children and young people.