

**Maxine Myatt's Question to the Children's Services & Education Select Committee 20 January 2022 with the Director's response:**

The question is outlined below:

*I would like to ask Buckinghamshire Council for more information about the Attainment Gap between children from disadvantaged background and other children, in our prosperous county of Buckinghamshire.*

*I consider this should be one of the key issues for Councillors and residents in Buckinghamshire and that more analysis about the underlying factors relating to the issue should be in the public domain. There are particular reasons why we should be very concerned about this. The annual Report of the Education Policy Institute 2020 (based on 2019 data) indicated that nationally narrowing the Attainment Gap had ground to a halt even before the Covid 19 pandemic. It is concerning that in Buckinghamshire, the 2019 data indicated an already worse situation with a worrying widening of the gap at secondary level.*

*I also note that the way you report performance against this indicator in terms of comparison to the national average, does not take into account that Buckinghamshire is a prosperous area. When the Education Policy Institute reworked data taking into account relative low levels of deprivation in Buckinghamshire (apart from pockets) our situation compares less favourably. Alan Milburn's work on Social Mobility in 2016, for the then Conservative Government, found that many of the richest places in England were doing worse for their disadvantaged children than places which were much poorer. It is concerning that his 2016 report identified South Bucks and Wycombe with some of the largest attainment gaps in the country.*

*I appreciate that Covid 19 will have impacted the situation – indeed we all know that disadvantaged children will have been affected more adversely than others. However, we are talking about a worrying situation that predates the pandemic.*

*I appreciate that measuring attainment for 2020 and 2021 has been a challenge, but would like to ask specifically if you could you provide a breakdown of the following:*

- *Secondary attainment data with outcomes for selective and non-selective schools separated*
- *Secondary attainment data according to area (Wycombe, Aylesbury, Chiltern and South Bucks)*
- *Secondary attainment data in relation to Disadvantaged Children according to ethnicity.*
- *Secondary attainment data in relation to the most Persistently Disadvantaged Children ( Those who remain qualified for free school meals for 80% of their school years)*

The response from the Director of Education:

As described in the report presented to the Select Committee, changes to assessments/exams linked to Covid19 restrictions mean that only a limited range of results for KS4/GCSE at national and local authority level have been published by the Department for Education (DfE). Local Authorities do not have access to pupil or school level results for 2020 or 2021 and as a result, we are unable to provide more detailed analysis of results.

As well as comparing Buckinghamshire results to the national average we have compared Buckinghamshire results to Statistical Neighbours where this information is available. Statistical Neighbours are other LAs deemed to have similar characteristics based on a range of background variables

**Secondary attainment data with outcomes for selective and non-selective schools separated.** This information was included in the 2019 Education Standards Report available at this [link](#) – see page 33. Both selective and non-selective school results compared favourably to the national averages for similar schools. Data by admissions basis has not been published by DfE for 2020 or 2021, and we do not have access to the underlying school level data that would be needed to calculate Buckinghamshire figures.

**Secondary attainment data according to area (Wycombe, Aylesbury, Chiltern and South Bucks).** This information is not available for 2020 and 2021 for the reasons above. 2019 data published by DfE is below.

	Pupils living within area		Pupils attending school within area	
	Number of KS4 pupils	Average Attainment 8 Score	Number of KS4 pupils	Average Attainment 8 Score
Aylesbury Vale	1974	50.2	2007	53.1
Chiltern	1057	60.2	1420	56.6
South Bucks	588	53.3	660	55.4
Wycombe	1920	51.2	1730	55.2

**Secondary attainment data in relation to Disadvantaged Children according to ethnicity.** This information is not available for 2020 and 2021 for the reasons above. 2019 data for the major ethnicity categories, as recorded on school census, are below. Results for the more detailed ethnic groups have also been provided where pupil group numbers are large enough.

	Disadvantaged Pupils		Other Pupils	
	Number of eligible pupils	Average Attainment 8 Score	Number of eligible pupils	Average Attainment 8 Score
Asian or Asian British	196	42.8	952	60.6
Black or Black British	44	36.8	112	54.8
Chinese	<5	<5	31	73.1
Mixed/Dual background	93	37.6	273	59.2
White	447	34.3	3527	57.0

	Disadvantaged Pupils		Other Pupils	
	Number of eligible pupils	Average Attainment 8 Score	Number of eligible pupils	Average Attainment 8 Score
Indian	21	51.3	364	70.4
Pakistani	153	40.6	415	49.6
Black Caribbean	21	27.7	30	43.6
White and Black Caribbean	51	33.8	71	46.8
White - British	418	33.7	3292	57.1
Any other white background	22	46.1	214	54.8

**Secondary attainment data in relation to the most Persistently Disadvantaged Children (Those who remain qualified for free school meals for 80% of their school years).** This is not a standard definition of disadvantage, so is not included in published figures. The definition of disadvantage used by the DfE is those pupils eligible for pupil premium, which covers children who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years. Results for this group of pupils is included in the report to Select Committee.

**Simon James**  
**Service Director: Education**