

REPORT OF THE
Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
PART II

245. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN HAMPSHIRE IN 2011

1. On 7 December 2011, the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services noted the assessment, test and examination results for Hampshire school children in 2011. He endorsed the priorities for improving the educational outcomes for all children and closing the gap for the most vulnerable. Support was given to the distribution of the report to schools, colleges and settings in Hampshire in order to alert them to the summary outcomes from 2011 tests and examinations and the future priorities which arise from them. The Executive Lead Member also noted the current and anticipated changes resulting from the current Education Bill and supported the School Improvement Service in capitalising on the opportunities and mitigating the potential impact of these changes on the ability of the service to promote school improvement.

2. High levels of educational attainment are essential: for the future economic prosperity for the nation, for individuals and for those individuals' future families. School success is also a matter of local pride and it contributes considerably to community cohesion and local prosperity when parents and their children have confidence in their neighbourhood school. Educational success provides choice for young people in relation to how they will spend their adult lives. It can mean that young people are better equipped to play their part as citizens and progress into the next stage of learning and life without being dependant upon the state.

3. Schools, colleges and other educational settings are key players in the drive for higher standards – but they are not the only ones. The quality of leadership, management, curriculum, teaching, assessment, and the approach taken to under-achievement in educational settings, remains crucial to the success of children and young people. The Local Authority (LA) still has a vital role to play in monitoring the quality of school provision and intervening when it is not sufficiently high. The LA is the champion of children and parents and is tasked with holding schools to account for the quality of the education they provide.

4. Hampshire's children and young people, overall, attain high educational standards. For most measures, Hampshire's children also do well when compared with standards nationally and standards in places most like Hampshire. 2011 saw improvements in these standards across the age range but particularly so for the youngest children and for 16 year olds. Overall, Hampshire's children and young people have continued to perform well:

- In assessments, tests and examination they have attained standards higher than in previous years and higher than those attained by children and young people who attend school in statistically similar areas of the country.
- Children from many black and minority ethnic groups have continued to do well in Hampshire, this is particularly true where the performance of boys in some groups had caused concern in 2010.

- Those with special needs have again made progress in Hampshire schools; those in care have done well in some Key Stages and the most able continue to progress.
- The attainment gap has narrowed slightly at both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 and children living in relative poverty in Hampshire do better than they do in similar authorities, particularly those in the South East. However, the gap between their performance and that of their more advantaged peers remains greater than is the national average.

5. The 2011 Education Bill reiterates the commitment to raise to seventeen the minimum age at which young people can leave education or training in 2013 and to eighteen in 2015 in recognition of the importance of such participation to the economic interests of young people and of the nation. The Education Bill also heralds a new era of institutional freedom in terms of curriculum, leadership and school improvement. The role out of Teaching Schools as a mechanism for school improvement is also a key plank of Government Education Policy. It is clear that such schools are viewed as a major resource for improving teaching. With the necessary support and infrastructure this initiative and the new institutional freedoms heralded by The Education Bill have the potential to change the way in which schools access support to improve.

6. The Local Authority will need to support Teaching Schools to ensure they are successful and that the way in which school to school support continues in Hampshire is coherent and a complementary tool for targeting intervention and securing support. This will be achieved by ensuring that the School Improvement Service continues to work with the whole family of Hampshire schools, including maintained schools, academies, free schools and teaching schools so that it can provide flexible and professional support and challenge as schools become more autonomous.

7. Further details can be found at www.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings.htm by typing in the relevant reference number:

- Educational Attainment in Hampshire in 2011 (search item reference 3332)

246. SCHOOL MEAL PRICES FROM APRIL 2012

1. On 18 January 2012, the Executive Lead Member approved that the price of school meals be maintained at the current level of £2.00 per meal from April 2012, for a fourth consecutive year. In Hampshire the price of a school meal is the same as the cost of a free school meal and prices apply to both Primary and Secondary schools.

2. This decision was possible in spite of the continued high costs associated with the improved food and nutritional content of the meal and general cost pressures on catering services due to the steady recovery in the number of school meals taken.

3. Since September 2012, the take up of pupils' school meals has reached record high levels. In October the number of meals delivered was fully 10% higher than in October 2010. Nearly 39% of primary school pupils take an H3CS meal every day. By the end of the year in excess of 6 million meals will have been served. The increased take up of meals is coming from within existing school customers rather than an increase in the number of schools using H3CS.

4. The school meals service plays an important role in the development of 'healthy eating' and supports the local economic development agenda.

5. Further details can be found at www.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings.htm by typing in the relevant reference number:

- School Meal Prices from April 2012, (Search item reference 3593)

COUNCILLOR ROY PERRY
Executive Lead Member for Children's Services