

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

WEDNESDAY 17 MARCH 2004 at 10.00A.M.

Agenda Item No.

2

A REVIEW OF SCHOOLS' PERFORMANCE FROM 2001 TO 2003

Report of the Director, Children, Schools and Families

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1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report covers school performance in 2003 set out under each key stage. Points of particular note are identified and linked to actions in the 2003/04 and 2004/05 CSF service plans;
- 1.2 The report also provides an update of the progress to review the strategy for school improvement that impacts on standards of performance.

2. Summary

- 2.1 Hertfordshire schools are doing well at all key stages compared to national averages and in comparison with our statistical neighbours. The overall levels of attainment mask significant under achievement in some geographical areas, between schools and amongst groups of children and individuals.
- 2.2 Trends over the last three years reflect national trends (relatively static), although we are well above them. For example, our results at Key Stage 2 appear to have reached a plateau above national averages by 3% mathematics, 5% English and 2% science.
- 2.3 Value added information shows that the rate of progress of pupils and young people in Hertfordshire schools is just ahead of the national average at Key Stages 1 to 3, but falls behind at Key Stage 4.

- 2.4 The review of the school improvement strategy is well underway with a task group of headteachers and governors working on the revision of the Code of Practice for LEA School Relations, and the strategy for monitoring, challenge, support and intervention.

3. Conclusion

There is much to be celebrated in the achievement levels of Hertfordshire schools. However, there are also some areas of significant concern. These areas of under performance and concern are being addressed as priorities.

In addition to the specific actions identified in the CSF plan, it is anticipated that the outcomes of the reviews will result in a stronger partnership with schools and better co-ordination of support across CSF which will have a positive impact on schools' performance. This impact should help to reduce the number of underperforming schools as well as improving the attainment of vulnerable children and groups.

In future years, members will receive an annual report on school performance and progress. This will be produced after the final external test and examination results are published by the DfES.

4. Background

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This report provides a commentary on the results of pupils and young people in Hertfordshire schools over the last three years. The analysis should be seen within a context of considerable developments in the area of school improvement and the sharper identification of the action that should be taken to address the areas of weakness.

4.1.2 Hertfordshire achieves very well compared to national averages but there is more that needs to be done to improve performance still further. The following steps are being taken to improve the performance of schools:

- revision of the strategy for school improvement;
- revision of the Code of Practice for CSF- School relations;
- revision of the strategy for monitoring, challenge, support and intervention for schools, including the strategy for school improvement;
- a review is being undertaken of the School Standards and Curriculum division.

4.1.3 All of the action detailed in 4.1.2 will be completed by 1st September 2004 and it is anticipated that it will have a significant impact on the quality of schooling for many young people. However, CSF is not waiting for the results of this work and this report sets out an analysis of what needs to be done and the steps being taken.

4.1.4 While the review is taking place officers of the School Standards and Curriculum division are working with schools to ensure that the targets are met and that there is good progress in all schools.

4.2 Key Stage 1

4.2.1 Summary Data

	Level 2+					Level 3+			
	2001	2002	2003	Target	stat. nb.*	2001	2002	2003	stat. nb.*
Reading	86 (83)	87 (84)	88 (84)	89	3 rd	na	36 (30)	34 (28)	2 nd
Writing	86 (84)	86 (86)	85 (81)	-	3 rd	na	15 (9)	22 (16)	2 nd
Maths	92 (90)	92 (90)	93 (90)	92.5	1 st	na	34 (31)	33 (29)	3 rd

**position against statistical neighbours (stat. nb.) – national figures in brackets.*

4.2.2 Analysis of Information

Levels of attainment in Hertfordshire in both primary key stages have been fairly static for the last two years, which reflects the national trend, although there are some improvements. The majority of schools perform above national expectations, but there remains a small minority that achieve less well. In the areas that are tested the following trends can be seen:

- **Writing:** 1% decrease at level 2 (decrease of 5% nationally and 4% by statistical neighbours).
7% increase at level 3 (increase of 7% nationally and 7% by statistical neighbours).
- **Reading:** 1% increase at level 2 (national figure static).
- We are well above the national average at level 2 English, but 1% below the CSF reading target. Our overall position for English is third amongst our statistical neighbours.
- **Mathematics:** 0.5% increase at level 2 (exceeded EDP target).
0.8% decrease level 3 (2% decrease nationally).

We remain well above the national average at level 2 and 3. (*Appendix 1*)

4.2.3 Looked after Children (LAC)

39.6% of our looked after children achieved level 2 or above in reading and 43.4% in writing. This is significantly below the level 2 achievements for all children in schools (88% reading, 85% writing).

4.2.4 Gender Differences

In reading, over a four year period, the gap between boys and girls is decreasing at level 2 and increasing at level 3. In writing there is a significant increase in the gap between the achievements of boys and girls. In mathematics, at level 3 boys are achieving 6% more than girls. Action to address the gender gap is a focus of our efforts in the CSF plan.

4.2.5 2004 Targets

We are on track to meet our 2004 Key Stage 1 targets for reading (90%), writing (87%) and mathematics (93%).

4.3 Key Stage 2

4.3.1 Summary Data

	Level 4+					Level 5+			
	2001	2002	2003	Target	stat. Nb.	2001	2002	2003	stat. nb.
English	79 (73)	80 (75)	80 (75)	88	74 2 nd *	34	35 (29)	33 (27)	28 1 st *
Science	90 (84)	89 (86)	90 (87)	-?	89 5 th *	39	42 (38)	47 (41)	43 2 nd *
Maths	76 (70)	78 (73)	76 (73)	84	74 4 th *	29	31 (28)	33 (29)	30 1 st *

* *position against statistical neighbours (stat. nb.) – national figures in brackets

4.3.2 Analysis of Information

The trend in standards at Key Stage 2 is static which broadly reflects the national picture. In the areas that are tested the following trends can be seen:

- **English:** 2% increase in reading at level 4 (1% nationally), 5% at level 5 (4% nationally)
2% increase in level 4 writing (static nationally) and a 2.5% drop in level 5 (drop of 2.0% nationally).
- **Mathematics:** 1.5% decrease at level 4 (static nationally) and at level 5 there is a 2% increase (1% nationally).
- **Science:** 0.6% increase at level 4 (1% increase nationally), 4.9% increase at level 5 (3% increase nationally).

51% of schools have a gap of 5% or more between English and mathematics results (38% English better than mathematics -13% mathematics better than at English). (*Appendix 2*)

4.3.3 Value Added analysis

The DfES has a model for identifying the progress that pupils make in school. This model standardises on a national average of 100. Hertfordshire schools achieved a value-added average of 100.1 with 199 schools scoring above the national average and 3 scoring above 103. However, 143 schools achieved below the national average and this is a priority for our work this year.

4.3.4 Floor targets

Floor targets are the levels above which all schools are expected to attain. 7% of our schools have attainment below 65% in both English and mathematics i.e below the national floor targets. In addition 9% are below 65% in English and 15% in mathematics.

4.3.5 **Looked after children (LAC)**

Results for looked after children were disappointing with 30.8% achieving level 4 and above and 19.5 % achieving level 5 (National figures are not yet reported for 2003 but in 2002 level 4+ was 40% and 5+ is not collected nationally.)

4.3.6 **Gender differences**

Hertfordshire data shows the gap between boys and girls is increasing. In English the gap between girls (86%) and boys (75%) is 11% at level 4, rising to 16% at level 5. This compares with a gender gap of 10% nationally at level 4 and 12% at level 5.

In mathematics, the gap is negligible at level 4 and boys perform 5% above girls at level 5 (6% nationally).

4.3.7 **Summary of key issues at key stages 1 and 2**

Compared to national figures and those for our statistical neighbours, children in Hertfordshire are reaching high standards. However there are a number of areas in which we need to address weaknesses.

- There is some way to go before we reach our EDP targets in most areas.
- The trends, especially at Key Stage 2, are static.
- Too many schools are still performing below floor targets.
- There is a widening gender gap in attainment in English.
- There is a gap between performance in English and mathematics, which is greater than that found nationally.
- African Caribbean, Traveller and LAC are underachieving.
- A large number of schools are scoring below 100 on the DfES value added measure.

4.3.8 **What are we doing?**

Priority 1.2 in the CSF Plan relates to school improvement in the primary sector. Examples of actions are:

- building on the Primary Strategy to include all subjects and a second tranche of schools;
- increasing consultant time spent undertaking school based work and focusing particularly on those below floor targets or with negative value added as well as other schools causing concern;
- Identifying groups of children who are underachieving e.g. African Caribbean, Traveller and LAC and using strategies to accelerate their progress;
- ensuring that there is a close working relationship between school development advisers (SDAs) and primary strategy consultants
- ensuring that key support is well co-ordinated and presents common messages;
- additional SDA visits to all schools below floor targets to agree a raising attainment action plan with the headteacher and governors;
- ensuring that leading teachers are more flexibly focused on under performing schools;

- a focus on the effective use of teaching assistants in raising attainment.

4.3.9 **2004 Targets**

The targets at Key Stage 2 are our most challenging and the area where there is the greatest gap between targets and performance (English 8%, mathematics 8%, science 3%). The targets for 2004 are 89% English, 87% mathematics and 92.5% science. We are on track to meet the science target but are likely to fall significantly short of the targets for English (4%) and mathematics (6%).

4.3.10 **Actions to accelerate progress towards targets**

In addition to those identified in 4.3.8 the following actions are being taken to accelerate progress towards the Key Stage 2 targets for English and mathematics:

- focused training and support for year 5 and 6 teachers (weekly in the case of teachers new to the year group);
- support with SATs analysis to identify and target areas of weakest performance;
- support for setting group targets;
- focused training for teaching assistants;
- Self Assessment Method learning package (interactive web-based revision programme known as SAM learning) for our 60 lowest attaining schools;
- additional SDA visits to schools performing below our floor targets to monitor their progress towards 2004 targets.

While the focus on years 5 and 6 is the most effective short term strategy to accelerate progress towards targets, an investment in the early years and at Key Stage 1 is more likely to impact on attainment in the long term.

4.4 Key Stage 3

4.4.1 Summary Data

	Level 5+					Level 6+			
	2001	2002	2003	Target	stat. nb.	2001	2002	2003	stat. nb.
English	70 (65)	72 (67)	73 (68)	78	72 1 st *	36(32)	38 (33)	40 (34)	38 4 th *
Science	73 (66)	74 (67)	74 (68)	74	73 4 th *	42 (34)	41 (33)	48 (40)	45 3 rd *
Maths	74 (66)	73 (67)	76 (70)	80	74 1 st *	51(42)	52(45)	56 (49)	53 3 rd *

**position against statistical neighbours (stat. nb.) – national figures in brackets*

Achievements at the end of Key Stage 3 are significantly above the national average and in English and mathematics we are the top performing authority compared to our statistical neighbours. In the areas that are tested the following trends can be seen:

- The improvements over the last three years broadly reflect the national picture.
- In science we have reached our target but we remain below target in English, mathematics and ICT.
- **English:** There was a small increase of 1.1% which matched the national increase of 1%.
- **Mathematics:** There was a 2.6% increase at level 5 compared to 3% nationally and 41% of pupils achieved level 6.
- **Science:** 0.1% increase at level 5+ and a significant increase of 6.6% at level 6
- In ICT the percentage at level 5 is 1.6% above the national average.
(Appendix 3)

4.4.2 Value Added analysis

Hertfordshire's average at the Key Stage 3 was 100.1 with 37 of our secondary schools achieving above the national average, including one school receiving the Leadership Incentive Grant (LIG). Two schools achieved above 103. There are 17 schools that have low value added (below 99), 10 are LIG schools.

4.4.3 Gender Differences

There is a gap of 13.9% between the attainment of boys (66.2%) and girls (80.1%) in English at level 5. This gap has decreased (4.6%) over the last three years but presents a continuing challenge. The gap between the performance of boys and girls in mathematics (3%) and science (2.1%) is less significant.

4.4.4 Floor targets

There are some signs of an improving trend in relation to floor targets at Key Stage 3. There are 21 schools (14 LIG) which did not reach floor targets in English in 2003, compared with 22 last year. Twelve schools (10 LIG) did not reach floor targets in mathematics, compared with 17 last year and 15 schools (12 LIG) did not reach floor targets in science, compared with 16 last year.

4.4.5 Summary of key issues

Compared to national figures and those for our statistical neighbours, children in Hertfordshire are reaching high standards. While this is to be applauded there are a number of identified areas where we need to perform better.

- We are reaching our EDP targets in science but are falling short in other subjects.
- In a significant minority of high attaining schools pupils are not making good progress between the end of Key Stages 2 and 3. This is especially the case in science and English. A significant majority of our schools are under performing in science compared to the national value added line.
- Pupils in a significant majority of low attaining schools are making slow progress between the end of key stages 2 and 3.
- English continues as a concern, particularly boys' writing.
- African Caribbean boys, Traveller and LAC are underachieving.
- The number of pupils that enter secondary school at level 4 and do not move above level 4 by the end of Key Stage 3 is high in English (15%) and science (20%).

4.4.6 What are we doing?

Priority 1.3 in the CSF plan relates to school improvement at Key Stage 3. Examples of actions are:

- building on the Key Stage 3 Strategy to include all subjects and more schools;
- increasing the time consultants spend on school based work and focusing on under performing schools and others causing concern;
- linking together more closely the work of strategy consultants, Advanced Skills Teachers (ASTs), SDAs and other school improvement professionals;
- extending the programme of leading departments and leading teachers to model and coach for others;
- identifying underachievement early and intervening to assist schools in addressing this;
- identifying underachieving groups and targeting support to ensure that all children reach the expected levels;
- ensuring that the work of specialist and leading edge schools are used to best effect to support other schools in Hertfordshire.

4.4.7 2004 Targets

At Key Stage 3 we are on track to meet our science target (75%) but are likely to fall short of the English (80%) and mathematics (82%) targets by about 5%.

4.4.8 Actions taken to accelerate progress towards targets

These actions focus on English and mathematics and include:

- training and in-school support to improve boys' writing;
- additional consultant support to under performing English and mathematics departments;
- funding for targeted pupil intervention programmes;
- funding and consultant support targeted upon pupils 'stuck' at level 4;
- modelling and coaching by leading teachers and departments.

4.5 Key Stage 4

4.5.1 Summary Data

	2001	2002	2003	2003 Target	stat. nb
5A* to C grades	56 (50)	55 (52)	58 (53)	63	2 nd
5A* to G grades	92 (87)	91 (87)	92 (86)	93	-
1 A* to G grades			97		1 st
Average point score (capped)	42 (34)	41 (35)	40 (35)	43.5*	1 st

**position against statistical neighbours (stat. nb.) – national figures in brackets*

**CSF Plan targets are uncapped figures - Capped means that the average is based upon each student's best 8 results, thus making this a more consistent measure across schools, because it eliminates variation due to schools entering young people for higher or lower numbers of GCSEs. Entering for a higher number tends to inflate the average

Results at GCSE show a variable pattern, but are well above the national average. The percentage of 5 A* to C grades has risen this year to 58% decreasing the gap between our target and actual to 5%.

- The uncapped average point score per student has also continued to rise slightly and we are on track to meet the EDP target.
- The 5 A* to G indicator has risen slightly this year to just above 92% compared to a target of 93%.
- The percentage of young people obtaining one GCSE at 96.6% is highest amongst our statistical neighbours; however, this still leaves too many young people with no qualifications.
- As a result of the diversity pathfinder initiative the authority now has 46 specialist schools. Of these 73% have results above the county average for 5A* to C, 17 are in the highest quartile and 3 in the lowest. There is no

evidence to suggest if this is a cause or a consequence of schools gaining specialist status.

- There are two geographic regions of the county that give particular cause for concern; Stevenage and the Lea Valley. In Stevenage there are 8 secondary schools and their 5 A* to C results place half of them in the lowest quartile with only one above the county average. In the Lea Valley there are seven schools; two are in the lowest quartile, one is in the highest, but only two schools are above the county average. (*Appendix 4*)

4.5.2 **Value Added analysis**

Using the DfES model, Hertfordshire's score was below the national average at 99.4. Thirty schools scored above the national average; this includes 2 LIG schools and 19 schools scored below 98 (10 LIG schools).

More detailed value added data is becoming available through the Fischer Family Trust. This indicates that over a quarter of our schools have low value added from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4.

4.5.3 **Gender Issues**

75% of our single sex schools showed a fall in % 5 A* to C grades between 2002 and 2003, but when value added measures are considered all of these schools, with one exception, have achieved standards at least in line with prior attainment predictions. Across the county girls results far outstrip the boys.

4.5.4 **Looked after children (LAC)**

Results were disappointing this year showing a marked fall in all measures. 53.9% of students attained 1 GCSE grade, 25.5% attained 5 A* to G grades, 2.6% attained 5 A* to C grades.

4.5.5 **Leadership Incentive Grant (LIG) schools and floor targets**

The majority of our LIG schools (14) showed improvement in 5A* to C grades from the previous year. There was also a very significant fall in the number of schools achieving less than 40% from 23 in 2002 to 14 in 2003. Three of the LIG schools are now above 40%. As in 2002 only one school fell below the national floor target (20%).

4.5.6 **Summary of key issues**

Compared to national figures and those for our statistical neighbours, children in Hertfordshire are reaching high standards. While our schools are in the main achieving well there are still a number of areas we need to address.

- We are falling short of our EDP targets.
- African Caribbean, Traveller and Looked after children are underachieving. (See appendix 4)
- There is a significant gender gap with girls out performing boys. Although, the results for boys and girls in this key stage are in line with prior attainment predictions, there is no room for complacency and there remains a lot to do.

- 3% of students leave school without a GCSE qualification.
- Too many schools are scoring below 100 on the DfES value added measure.

4.5.7 **What are we doing?**

Priority 1.4 in the CSF Plan relates to school improvement for 14 to 19.

Examples of actions are:

- the new Hertfordshire 14-19 strategy that requires collaboration between schools and innovative curriculum development;
- extending specialist learning routes to widen opportunities for this age range, to provide guidance on development of Key Stage 4 curriculum and training about a wider range of teaching and learning styles;
- providing guidance to schools on the increased range of Key Stage 4 accreditation;
- targeting support to raise the attainment of students at risk of not achieving 5 A* to G;
- providing training on new approaches to, and theories of, learning
- extending the Key Stage 3 strategy into Key Stage 4.

4.5.8 **2004 Targets**

There is currently a 4.5 % gap between target and performance at GCSE 5A* to C but we are on track to close this gap considerably in 2004 by focusing support and accelerating progress.

4.5.9 **Actions to accelerate progress towards targets**

Two key actions focus particularly on under performing schools and departments. Our 14 LIG Schools are challenged and supported by our LIG Consultant (ex-secondary headteacher) with a focus on raising standards by improving the effectiveness of leadership and management both as individual schools and as part of a collaborative. In addition, 10 Hertfordshire Schools are involved in a DfES School Performance Collaborative project targeted at schools with a negative value added (KS2-3, KS3-4 or KS2-4). This project focuses on using data at pupil level to set targets and accelerate progress.

4.6 **Other areas of work identified in the CSF plan**

Priorities 1.5, 1.6 and 1.7 are about developing the capacity of all schools to raise achievement for all young people and they commit CSF to focus on areas of under achievement throughout the county. The focus is on improving learning opportunities for our students and supports the notion of “school effectiveness plus”. They include:

- continued support for the healthy schools initiative, the Drugs Action Team and the teenage pregnancy strategy;
- supporting the development of assessment for learning;
- developing a county sports strategy and strengthening the Arts strategy;
- providing a programme of national or regional conferences for teachers;
- strengthening support for Gifted and Talented young people;

- providing training for teacher assistants (including higher level);
 - supporting collaborative and good practice networks;
 - promoting strategies to enhance learning through ICT;
 - greater focus on support for under-performing schools and others causing concern;
 - a review of the Code of Practice and a sharper approach to monitoring, challenge, support and intervention (MCSI);
 - driving up standards through the second year of the LIG programme.
- 4.7 Behaviour and attendance have a significant impact on achievement. The review of the Schools Standards and Curriculum division will result in much closer work with Quadrant based staff. Through this work, strategies to improve behaviour and attendance will be tied in more closely to the school effectiveness agenda which should result in improved performance.
- 4.8 The review of the strategy for school improvement is well underway. The review will identify the most effective ways of raising standards and ensuring that all parts of CSF work in a coherent way to improve the performance of pupils at school. The review is looking at:
- the strategy for school improvement;
 - an update of the Code of Practice for LEA-School Relations;
 - the strategy for monitoring, challenge support and intervention;
 - how to build the capacity and capability of schools;
 - in the light of the above review, the structure of the School Standards and Curriculum division.
- 4.9 The process of review has included briefings to all the phase groups of headteachers, governors, the School Standards and Curriculum division, a Members' Seminar. There is a task group formed from the Strategic Management Partnership Group which is working with officers to develop new policies and strategies. At the heart of these policies is raising of standards and meeting targets. The task groups work will be discussed with headteachers and governors in a series of meetings in the week of 22 March. In the same week there is a meeting of the Achievement Panel and this will provide an opportunity for Members to consider and comment on the proposals.
- 4.10 Formal consultation will take place with stakeholders in the summer term. It is proposed to hold a seminar for Members to consider the policies and strategies in detail.
- 4.11 The revision of policies and strategies is central in the drive to raise standards.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 In addition to the specific actions identified in the CSF plan, it is anticipated that the outcomes of the reviews will result in a stronger

partnership with schools and better co-ordination of support across CSF which will have a positive impact on schools' performance. This impact should help to reduce the number of underperforming schools as well as improving the attainment of vulnerable children and groups.

5.2 In future years members will receive an annual report on school performance and progress. This will be produced after the final external test and examination results are published by the DfES.

6. Access to Service Implications

There are none for this report.

7. Financial Implications

Any costs incurred are already provided for through the CSF Plan 04/05 or the Growth and Change programme.

Background Information used in compiling this report:

- Data received from DfES and Fischer Family Trust.
- 2003 SATs and examination results
- Previous Panel Reports and Members Bulletins especially "The Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils" – Summer 2003 and "The Educational Achievement of Children in Care" Report to Corporate Parenting Panel – 3 December 2003
- Trend data on school performance
- CSF Annual Plan

If you would like to know more about the issues referred to in this report, please contact:

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Notes for amplification

Our Statistical Neighbours are:

Bedfordshire
Cheshire
Essex
Gloucestershire
Kent
Lancashire
Surrey
Warwickshire
West Sussex
Worcestershire

The Fischer Family Trust (FFT)

This is a charitable organisation established in the late 1990s to research value added measures in education. They now have a database going back to 1998 that they use to match school and individual performance against and hence obtain quite sophisticated analysis of the value that schools add to their students' achievements. They have also developed models that schools can use to make forward projection of children's likely performance based upon their prior attainment. CSF purchases access to the FFT database and modelling systems. These are used centrally to help us identify schools that are under performing but also many of the reports are shared with schools so that they can see how they are performing. In the past few months the DfES has begun to work closely with the FFT to develop its own awareness of value added measures. If members wish to know more detail of the FFT's models and to see some of the materials, please contact Andy Cunningham.