

**Draft Scrutiny Inquiry Final Report
Raising Attainment in Maths and
English
19th September 2013**



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Introduction and Scope

Introduction

- 1 Leeds has an ambition to be a child friendly city by 2030. The methodology for delivering this vision is outlined in The Children and Young Peoples Plan which details five headline outcomes one of which is to ensure Children and Young People do well at all levels of learning and have the skills for life.
- 2 At its meeting on the 20th of June 2012, the Scrutiny Board was presented with an overview of The Leeds Education Challenge, a city-wide campaign to accelerate improvement in learning outcomes for 180,000 children and young people by:
 - Realigning resources
 - Developing a school led improvement strategy
 - Ensuring equality
 - Promoting challenge, partnership and innovation
- 3 The presentation highlighted that general attainment is close to national averages however improvement rates are slow. Comparative data also highlighted that Leeds' position when compared to 151 other authorities was particularly low for GCSE attainment 5 A*-C, which included English and maths.
- 4 The Board resolved to undertake an inquiry into raising attainment in maths and English as it was evident there are a number of barriers preventing children and young people in Leeds from achieving maths and English qualifications.
- 5 The importance in securing qualifications in maths and English was

highlighted in an inquiry undertaken by the Scrutiny Board in 2012, 'Increasing the Number of Young People in Education, Employment or Training'. It was evident during that inquiry that both qualifications are significant attributes for young people to have when trying to secure employment or an apprenticeship.

Scope of the Inquiry

- 6 Terms of reference for this inquiry were agreed at our board meeting on 27 September 2012. At that meeting we concluded the purpose of the inquiry would be to make an assessment of and, where appropriate, make recommendations on the following areas:
 - The approach of educational establishments to teaching maths and English
 - Leadership, strategies and systems for improvement
 - Teaching methods, skills and capacity
 - Targeted maths and English support for children and young people, monitoring progress, tracking improvement and target setting
 - Assisting parents and carers to support children and young people in maths and English education
- 7 The inquiry was undertaken by a working group, which consisted of members of the Scrutiny Board, over five sessions, commencing on 18 December 2012 and concluding on 7 May 2013.
- 8 Documents produced by Ofsted and the Department of Education provided a valuable resource for the Scrutiny Board



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and a focus for the inquiry. Reference to all the evidence and resources utilised is detailed at the end of this report.

- 9 We received a range of written and oral evidence and we are very grateful to everyone who gave their time to participate in this inquiry. A full list of those who participated is detailed at the end of this report.

Desired Outcomes and Anticipated Service Impact

- 10 Our recommendations require a number of improvement measures. Such measures could require additional resources, the cost of which may be required from existing budgets.
- 11 We hope that our findings will contribute to securing better educational outcomes for children and young people, particularly to raising attainment in maths and English and reducing the attainment gap that exists between vulnerable and non-vulnerable pupils. Supporting pupils to achieve in maths and English must remain a high priority in order to secure their future success in adulthood. We consider that there is significant scope to improve the levels of maths and English attainment in the city and evidence presented to us demonstrates that some changes do not have to be major or costly to have a significant impact.

Equality and Diversity

- 12 The Equality Improvement Priorities 2011 to 2015 have been developed to ensure that the council meets its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010. The priorities will help the council to identify work and activities that help to reduce disadvantage, discrimination and inequalities of opportunity to achieve its ambition to be the best city in the UK.
- 13 Equality and diversity issues have been considered throughout this Scrutiny Inquiry. The evidence submitted and the topics debated in this inquiry have highlighted that:
- There is a clear link between deprivation and educational outcomes, however some schools in Leeds have overcome this and are performing well.
 - Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals do not perform as well as those pupils who are not eligible.
 - Progression rates for boys during their early education are lower than for girls.
 - Achievement figures for SEN¹ children in Leeds are below national figures, which indicate that further investigative work needs to be undertaken to identify why this is the case.
 - Educational attainment for Leeds EAL² pupils in maths and English when compared to national figures is less.

Further specific information is detailed later in the report.

¹ Special Educational Needs

² English Additional Language



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14 Where we have made any recommendations, which are subsequently agreed, the individuals, organisations or groups responsible for implementation or delivery should give due regard to equality and diversity and, where appropriate, an equality impact assessment will be carried out.

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Conclusions and Recommendations

Maths and English – The Leeds Picture

15 We felt that the initial part of our inquiry should focus on understanding the educational picture of Leeds. The means for assessing the effectiveness of schools and the Local Education Authority in the delivery of a quality education for children and young people is sourced from a number of areas. The predominant source is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) who carry out inspections and regulatory visits throughout England, and publish the results. Inspections include a focus on four particular areas:

- the achievement of pupils
- the quality of teaching
- the behaviour and safety of pupils
- the quality of leadership and management.

16 Inspectors use a four-point grading scale to judge the quality of education provided in a school:

- Grade 1: outstanding
- Grade 2: good
- Grade 3: satisfactory ('requires improvement' from September 2012)
- Grade 4: inadequate.

In September 2012 Ofsted 'raised the bar' for school inspection. The new grade 'requires improvement' replaced the 'satisfactory' grade.

17 We were advised of the grading for all schools in Leeds as at November 2012, these were as follows:

- Primary
Grade 1 = 42 schools,
Grade 2 = 122 schools,
Grade 3 = 53 schools,
Grade 4 = 2 schools
- Secondary
Grade 1 = 2 schools,
Grade 2 = 22 schools,
Grade 3 = 11 schools,
Grade 4 = 3 schools

18 We were advised that Leeds is aspiring to achieve a minimum of a 'good' (2) grade for all schools and that there has already been a significant improvement in Leeds. We expressed our concern at the number of schools on grade 3 and 4 and recognise there is a significant challenge ahead to achieve this aspiration.

19 Other mechanisms for measuring effectiveness and performance is by using attainment results, such as GCSE results, or by measuring levels of progress made by pupils at each key stage as they progress through their education.

20 Targets for progressing a pupil's level of progress are usually set by the schools themselves. These are generally 3 or 4 levels of improvement for each pupil. We were advised that schools are expected to support their pupils to achieve better than their expected level progress.

21 A table was provided which ranked Leeds against other authorities on main indicators relevant to maths and



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English. Disappointingly the 2012 ranking for Leeds was 126 out of 151 Local Authorities. (see Appendix 1). We sought clarification on how useful national statistics are as a comparator. It was explained that there is no one statistic that provides a definitive overview of performance or reflects local challenges, however Leeds currently aspires to be in the top 50% of all league tables.

- 22 We were presented with a wealth of data for maths and English attainment/progress in Leeds at Early Years, Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4. Most of the data sets presented a 3 year trend over 2010/11/12.
- Foundation stage - outcomes are improving in general for Leeds, as it is nationally, so the attainment gap between national results and Leeds results is not closing.
 - Key Stage 1 - The percentage of pupils meeting the required standard of phonics decoding is higher than the national average. Leeds is below the national average and behind its statistical neighbours for the number of pupils achieving Level 2 + and 3 +, even though a gradual year-on-year improvement is evident.
 - Key Stage 2 – The percentage of pupils achieving level 4+ and 5+ has increased for Leeds: However, the national figures have also accelerated and therefore the gap remains. The percentage of Leeds pupils making expected progress was reported as higher than national figures for both English and Maths.
 - Key Stage 4 – The headline indicators reflected that achievement at GCSE level for 5+ A* - C is

consistently higher than national figures. However when maths and English results are included Leeds has been consistently below national and statistical neighbour results since 2010. We were advised that the 2012 anticipated improvements in Leeds had been diminished by the GCSE English regrading issue³; however this issue had an impact across the country therefore national and statistical neighbour comparisons are still relevant.

The Attainment Gap

- 23 'Made to Measure'⁴ states that nationally children start school with different levels of knowledge and for too many pupils this gap is never overcome. Their attainment at 16 years can largely be predicted by their attainment at year 11 and this can be tracked back to the knowledge and skills they have acquired by age 7. Gaps increase as pupils move through primary and secondary education. Compounding this, it has been identified that younger, less able pupils received weaker teaching than their older and more able peers, with no apparent reasoning behind this strategy.
- 24 'Moving English Forward'⁵ states that 30% of students who are entered for GCSE English do not achieve A* to C. Those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals (FSM)

³During 2011/2012 the outcome of the English GCSE results has been a prominent concern. The grade boundary description to achieve a grade 'C' is now what was historically the grade 'B' description. The average A*-C achievement for Leeds is lower than originally expected as a result of the marking changes in the summer 2012.

⁴ Mathematics – Made to Measure, Ofsted May 2012

⁵ Moving English Forward, Ofsted May 2012



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continue to achieve less highly in English than those pupils who are not eligible. This data is also similarly reflected for pupils studying maths, who fare badly in comparison with their non-FSM peers. The report also states that between 2008 and 2011 little progress has been made in closing the gap between the performance of pupils who live in the most disadvantaged areas of the country and those who live in the most affluent areas.

- 25 We were advised that in Leeds there is a progressive increase in birth rates and inward migration which is presenting an increase of children entering primary education. There is also an increase in the number of children whose first language is not English and in the number of children now eligible for free school meals – particularly in younger age groups.
- 26 It was established that there is a clear link between deprivation and educational outcomes:
- At reception stage, of those children eligible for FSM, only 46% reach a good level of development; whereas 67% of those not eligible for FSM reach a good level of development.
 - At GCSE stage, of those that attain 5A* - C including maths and English, 31% are entitled to FSM compared to 63% who are not eligible for FSM.
- 27 The data presented demonstrates improvement in maths and English educational attainment city wide. Whilst this is commendable it is not a reflection of performance in all localised areas. We feel there is a clear need for focus on those areas where attainment in certain pockets of the city is not improving and that the Cluster Partnerships have a key role in driving improvement collaboratively with the School Improvement Service.
- 28 We did identify that there is not a uniform pattern in the attainment for all schools in deprived areas so there are other factors that influence results. For example over 95% of children are achieving level 4 in English at St Anthony's in Beeston, St Bartholomew's in Armley and Beecroft in Kirkstall. These are not situated in affluent areas but are bucking the trend and achieving high results. This demonstrates that the school itself is critical to making a difference and narrowing the gap.
- 29 We acknowledge that there are other factors such as diet, living conditions and family support which can have an impact on attainment and that deprivation can only be used as a proxy indicator, which needs to be interpreted carefully.
- 30 We feel it is important to gain a clear understanding of the techniques and processes applied by schools that are performing well in deprived areas with large cohorts of vulnerable pupils.
- 31 Further analysis should identify why this may be, what can be learned from these schools and what makes a school good in challenging circumstances: The findings could assist schools in similar circumstances to overcome challenges and raise attainment levels.



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Recommendation 1 – That the Director of Children’s Services in collaboration with Cluster Partnerships undertakes detailed analysis of schools who are achieving in challenging circumstances to identify the source(s) and reasons for their success which may then assist other schools in similar challenging circumstances. The Director is requested to provide a progress report to the Scrutiny Board at the April 2014 meeting.

- 32 We expressed our concern about the rate of improvement for boys at Key Stage 1, particularly in writing and maths, as it is not progressing at the same rate as for girls. ‘Moving English Forward’ states that across all phases, girls continue to outperform boys in English. This assertion also reflects the outcome for boys generally in early years, which also continues through early education. This is not just a Leeds issue but a national issue. We were advised that there has been a significant amount of research on this issue, including looking at appropriate learning styles for boys. We were advised that teaching techniques are influential, for example formal learning introduced too early can be counterproductive whereas imaginative active learning is considered to be an effective approach for many pupils.
- 33 There is a link between the achievement of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and their level of need, which is to be expected. However the achievement figures for Leeds are below national figures, which highlights that further investigative work needs to be

undertaken to identify why this should be the case. We also need to identify what we can learn from other Education Authorities that are achieving higher than average educational outcomes for SEN children.

- 34 Children whose first language is not English are often referred to as EAL pupils (English Additional Language). Educational attainment levels in maths and English in Leeds when compared to national figures are lower. We sought clarification on how we support the achievement of children who speak a diverse range of languages. We were advised that resources such as the School Improvement Team and the Equalities Team are utilised to broker support. Good leadership, quality teaching and targeted support is known to make a difference. There are also a number of projects being undertaken in some schools, such as the Arooj project, (referred to later in this report) which are having an impact with specific groups.
- 35 We were pleased to note that attainment figures for looked after children (LAC) are in line with national statistics and that there has been success in improving outcomes for LAC since 2010. We hope to see continued efforts improve attainment levels further and to support LAC to achieve their full potential.
- 36 The wealth of data presented enabled us to gain a clearer understanding of the maths and English attainment levels across the city and identify vulnerable groups that require additional support in order to progress to higher levels of attainment. It was evident that there is a need for greater analysis of the data collected in order to identify which



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interventions are effective and which are not. There is also a need to identify why certain vulnerable groups have lower than expected progress when compared to national statistics. The underlying issues need to be understood so the barriers that inhibit achievement in maths and English we can start to be broken down.

Recommendation 2 – That the Director of Children’s Services undertakes an investigation and detailed analysis to identify the underlying issues that create barriers to achievement in Maths and English for vulnerable children in Leeds. The Director is requested to provide a progress report to the Scrutiny Board at the April 2014 meeting.

The Maths and English Curriculum

37 Nationally, the most successful schools were those that had identified the particular needs of their pupils and then design a distinctive curriculum to meet those needs. Ofsted state that too few schools have effective programmes for developing literacy skills across the curriculum. Schools need a coherent policy on developing literacy in all subjects if standards of reading and writing are to be improved.⁶

38 At Primary level it has been identified that mathematics should be applied in a wider context and embedded into other subject areas to provide real-life context. In addition we were pleased to note that in Leeds at secondary level whole school literacy and mathematics is a priority to promote the teaching of both

in other subjects. All teachers now have to be teachers of literacy.

39 It was brought to our attention that there are challenges due to a lack of opportunities for maths to be incorporated in some subjects. In addition there is an identified variation of consistency in the quality of mathematics teaching at secondary level. We were also advised that there is evidence in some schools of a lack of organisation in both maths and English which results in the repeating of subjects at key stage 3 and 4 instead of moving teaching onto new skill sets.

40 We acknowledge that teachers need to be aware of how other subjects can add a depth of knowledge and understanding in literacy and mathematics. Strong leadership is needed to drive improvement and promote joined up thinking. The inclusion of literacy and mathematics across other subjects is welcomed by the Scrutiny Board and should be reflected across the curriculums of all schools in Leeds.

Early Entry for Maths and English Examinations

41 ‘Made to Measure’ states that in most primary schools intervention has become more focused and timely in helping pupils overcome difficulties and close gaps. It remained centred on examination performance in the majority of secondary schools, linked to widespread use of early GCSE entry and repeated sitting of units. This has encouraged short-termism in teaching and learning and has led to underachievement at GCSE, particularly for able pupils, as well as a lack of

⁶ Moving English Forward, Ofsted May 2012



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attention to the attainment of the least able. Too much teaching has concentrated on the acquisition of disparate skills that enabled pupils to pass tests and examinations but did not equip them for the next stage of education, work and life. The best schools made decisions about qualifications, course options and entry policies with the best interests of individual pupils at heart.

42 In response to information provided we expressed concern that the work done to help children exceed expectations at primary level does not always continue at secondary level. We consider that a target driven system encourages the education of children to pass exams rather than create a deeper understanding. It was highlighted that there are children in Leeds who have good levels of attainment at primary school who are subsequently only gaining average GCSE qualifications. It is believed that this may be partly attributable to early entry for GCSE examinations. Able pupils potentially could have attained a higher grade had they continued their studies and entered the exam in year 11.

43 It was explained that early entry produces dividends in terms of results for schools, however there can be detrimental issues for the pupil. Continuity in learning is a problem particularly if a gap in learning has been created. This is particularly unhelpful for pupils progressing to AS/A levels as they may have missed key elements of the GCSE curriculum required for their continuing education. We were also concerned that young people may be less inclined to progress to AS/A level due to average GCSE attainment.

44 Whilst we understand that early entry for examinations can create extra capacity in year 11 for pupils to concentrate on other subjects, we feel that the decision to enter a young person for a maths or English exam early should not be taken lightly. Schools should always have the best interests of individual pupils at heart and both the pupil and their parents should have a clear understanding of the potential negative implications of early entry for examinations.

Recommendation 3 – That the Director of Children’s Services scrutinises the early entry policies for maths and English GCSE examinations for secondary schools in Leeds to ensure that policies are not counterproductive to pupil attainment. The Director is requested to provide a progress report to the Scrutiny Board at the April 2014 meeting.

Transitional Arrangements

45 According to Ofsted, curriculum transition in English from key stage 2 to key stage 3 is underdeveloped in too many schools: The quality of transition between key stage 2 and 3 in English often being no better than satisfactory. The lack of regular communication and exchange of ideas between primary and secondary schools has created problems for continuity in teaching and assessment.⁷

46 Research undertaken by the Department of Education highlights that students who have experienced a positive transition from primary school were more likely to have higher

⁷ Moving English Forward



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attainment in all core subjects and also make better progress in maths and science at age 14⁸.

- 47 We sought to clarify the processes in place to support the transition of children between key stages. In response we were advised that transition support work is undertaken at each individual school. At cluster level there are relationships between primary and receiver (secondary) schools and also between the early year's foundation service and primary schools. Teachers share experience and expertise and there is a focus on pupils and not just process and systems. Information accumulated about pupils is passed on to the receiver school.
- 48 Securing continuity of learning between primary and secondary school is key to ensure that pupils maintain good levels of progress. It is our understanding that there can be a dip in the pace of pupil progress as a result of the summer break, however we feel that pupils should not be let down or hindered by weaknesses in the transition process.
- 49 It was highlighted to us that transition will be an area of focus through the Leeds Education Challenge. In addition we were also advised that there is an intention to focus on securing a smooth transition to ensure that momentum is maintained for children in their learning in English and literacy.
- 50 Evidence was presented to us that highlighted transitional arrangements for
- pupils between schools could be improved. The attainment system as it currently stands creates push at certain stages including year 6. This has resulted in some pupils being reported with higher levels of progress to secondary schools that does not reflect their realistic capacity to learn and progress. This raises expectations which are not fair on children or secondary practitioners. We were advised that it is important to consider the pupil information and the pupil themselves and how important it is for an honest realistic and accurate appraisal.
- 51 It was brought to our attention that it is normal practice for pupils to be reassessed when they enter secondary education. Key stage 2 data forms part of that assessment. Assessment is generally approached delicately as it occurs at a time when pupils are settling into a new learning environment.
- 52 We acknowledge the sheer amount of effort required in supporting pupils though this critical stage in their education. It was clarified that some secondary schools have a high level of feeder schools. Priesthorpe School for example has 37 feeder schools, each providing their own version of documentation for each child. It was expressed that it would be helpful if there was a standardisation of pupil information utilised by feeder schools.

⁸ Effective Pre-School, Primary and Secondary Education Project (EPPSE 3 – 14) Influences on students' attainment and progress in Key Stage 3: Academic outcomes in English, maths and science in Year 9 – Department of Education Research Brief, DFE-RB184a, January 2012



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Recommendation 4 – That the Director of Children’s Services investigates the viability of collaborating with schools in the design and implementation of city wide standardised reporting format for feeder schools to provide consistent high quality information to secondary schools to aid the transition process. The Director is requested to provide a progress report to the Scrutiny Board at the April 2014 meeting.

Recommendation 5 – That the Director of Children’s Services facilitates dialogue and action at the appropriate level/forum to reinforce the importance of providing accurate and realistic pupil information to secondary schools throughout the whole transition process. The Director is requested to advise the Scrutiny Board of the proposed process for facilitating dialogue in the Directors response.

Raising the Standards of Maths and English Education.

Support, Leadership and Quality of Teaching

53 Schools are expected to take an active responsibility for their own improvement and also in supporting the improvement of other schools in the system, by drawing on existing skills and capacity of teachers and leaders in the school

system.⁹ In addition school standards and improvement is also supported and challenged by the School Improvement Service, based in Children’s Services.

54 We were presented with an overview of current school improvement provision in Leeds. It was explained that the size of the School Improvement Service has reduced considerably in terms of resources. The service is increasingly acting as a broker and facilitator, supporting Heads, School Management Teams and school structures to implement a school led system, which includes self-evaluation and quality assurance. The service also facilitates school-to-school support and directly provides additional support to schools where it is identified as necessary.

55 In Leeds both core and traded services are also offered to schools. The core support includes a termly visit to review standards. In addition HR and recruitment support is provided as well as support before, during and after an Ofsted inspection. This includes preparing leaders for Ofsted in strengthening quality assurance processes and gathering evidence of achievement.

56 We requested data that identified the types of traded services or interventions/support that had the greatest impact on school improvement. We wanted to identify if there was a clear improvement trend that could be attributed to a school’s engagement with the School Improvement Service. We were advised that there have not been

⁹Action research into the evolving role of the local authority in education, Department of Education June 2012.



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any data trends evaluated from the involvement of the School Improvement Team. We concluded that it is important to understand the value of school support to identify which types of interventions and support are having the greatest impact. This will facilitate the more effective targeting of resources.

Recommendation 6 – That the Director of Children’s Services evaluates the improvement in education provision as a result of traded service and School Improvement Service engagement and identifies which interventions and support are the most effective in driving improvement forward. The Director is requested to provide a progress report to the Scrutiny Board at the April 2014 meeting.

- 57 Research has highlighted that school-to-school support mechanisms are more effective when they are brokered and held to account by someone external to the two schools involved and that schools can find it very difficult to challenge each other, unless that challenge is invited or objectively brokered by a third party.⁹ We consider that the School Improvement Service should continue to develop a key role in such practice.
- 58 With an increasing number of schools choosing to become Academies we recognise the challenge of maintaining city wide standards and providing services where schools are opting out of a Local Authority maintained system. In such circumstances we wish to see continued efforts in Leeds to broker school-to-school support and offer traded services in an effort to maintain
- effective collaborative relationships with all schools.
- 59 It has already been established and is well documented that good leadership and quality teaching makes a difference to the educational outcomes of children and young people. We therefore wanted to identify if there is sufficient capacity in our educational system to provide the leadership and quality teaching required to raise maths and English attainment levels in Leeds.
- 60 We were advised that in some secondary schools there is still too much in school variation in the quality of Maths teaching, which in general does not seem to be strategically led. Feedback is important to enable children to understand problems and it has been found that there is also a variation in the quality of feedback provided. In order to close the attainment gap it is recognised that levels of teaching must be consistently good or better.
- 61 Ofsted specify¹⁰ that schools should endeavour to tackle in-school inconsistency of teaching, making more teachers good or outstanding, so that every pupil receives a good mathematics education. In addition the expertise of staff should be developed to ensure policies and guidance are backed up by professional development.
- 62 In Leeds it is usual practice for the School Improvement Service to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and guidance with subject leaders, who are then given the responsibility to impart this

¹⁰ Mathematics – Made to Measure, Ofsted, May 2012



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information to those who teach in the classroom environment. For us this reinforces the importance of a strong leadership structure to ensure that this occurs. If this is not in place then it is unlikely that good practice principles will be passed onto classroom teachers.

- 63 Reassuringly, throughout the inquiry significant evidence has been presented which demonstrates that a continued effort is being made to raise the quality of teaching and reduce inconsistency. We were advised that work is already being undertaken at primary level to focus on continued professional development of teaching staff in arithmetic proficiency.
- 64 We were also provided with an overview on the Leeds Learning Partnership, which facilitates networking, briefings, conferences and meetings as a support mechanism for the providers of secondary education. Support can be, and is, tailored to focus on literacy and numeracy, including the provision of subject leader development meetings and conferences in maths and English.
- 65 Other projects and strategies implemented within certain schools in Leeds such as the Arooj project, Gaining Ground Strategy and Every Child Counts, have also had a direct impact on the quality of teaching provided, referred to later in this report.
- 66 Ofsted have identified that having too few specialists is a challenge faced by many secondary schools. Too few English co-ordinators in primary schools are subject specialists¹¹. Some Headteachers have adopted a strategy

of recruiting and nurturing newly qualified staff, developing enthusiastic teaching assistants and learning mentors into mathematics and English teachers through a school-based training route and use of subject enhancement and development programmes.

- 67 We wished to identify if schools in Leeds are currently struggling to recruit teaching staff with the required specialist skills in maths and English. We were reassured that at present there is not too much difficulty in recruiting teaching staff. However, we were advised that Leeds University is due to cease providing PGCE courses for English which could have an impact. We were also informed that the strategy of recruiting and nurturing staff 'growing our own' within the Leeds school environment is currently being employed.
- 68 We found the information presented by the Principal of John Jamieson School and the Head of the Teaching School, Yorkshire Inclusive Teaching School Alliance (YorksITSA)¹² very insightful. Teaching schools have a leading role in the training and professional development of teachers, support staff and head teachers. We were informed that the school has a strong track record of collaborative working and aims to drive improvement in the quality of professional practice to improve attainment.
- 69 To raise standards in maths and English, Teaching Schools facilitate training and development for

¹¹ Moving English Forward, Ofsted, May 2012

¹² YorksITSA is one of 4 teaching schools alliances operating in the Leeds Area.



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practitioners via new entrant training such as 'Schools Direct' and ongoing professional/leadership development courses, particularly to get teaching practice from satisfactory to good and outstanding. Such courses are accredited by recognised colleges and universities. Courses are also available for Head Teachers, middle and senior leaders.

- 70 The performance of teaching schools is rigorously monitored by the National College. Local Authorities also have the capacity to challenge teaching schools on matters of performance. We believe that strong partnerships between Leeds City Council and the Teaching School Alliances will be beneficial in driving educational improvement across this city. We would fully support this development.
- 71 There are 28 schools in the YorksITSA who benefit from school-to-school support, by sharing skills, experience and resources to improve achievement. This includes access to professionals who are National, Local and Specialist Leaders of Education who can use their skills and experience to provide support to schools in challenging circumstances and develop leadership practice.
- 72 We were informed by a Specialist Leader of Education that sharing expertise is an effective system of school-to-school support, the issue is that not all schools are aware of the support available. The schools that know about this resource seem to be those who are brokered by Leeds City Council.
- 73 It is apparent to us that there are clear benefits for schools who are members of

an alliance; however not all schools are engaged even though there is no cost associated. So far the YorksITSA has undertaken some promotional work with secondary Headteachers. Given the apparent benefits for schools of joining an alliance we consider that further work should be undertaken to promote membership, particularly with Primary Schools. Leeds City Council has a key brokering role to play particularly in promoting and communicating the benefits of joining a teaching school alliance and accessing National, Local and Specialist leaders of education.

Recommendation 7 – That the Director of Children’s Services investigates how the service can be effective in raising awareness about the benefits of Teaching School Alliance membership and making more extensive use of National, Local and Specialist Leaders of Education with Headteachers and Governors. The Director is requested to provide a progress report to the Scrutiny Board at the April 2014 meeting.

- 74 We were informed that the YorksITSA has funding available for research and development and the capacity to draw on expertise to undertake specific projects where a successful request has been made. We believe that Children’s Services should seek to utilise the research resource for more in depth analysis of maths and English education and attainment in Leeds and the action required to raise attainment.



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Recommendation 8 – That the Director of Children’s Services investigates how Leeds City Council and the YorksITSA can utilise project funding to research Maths and English attainment in Leeds and the action required for improvement. The Director is requested to advise the Scrutiny Board about the progress of the investigation in the Directors response.

Making the most of Data and Performance information

75 ‘Made to Measure’ states that the fastest improving schools monitor provision rigorously and used the outcomes to identify strengths and weaknesses, evaluate the effectiveness of actions taken, and pinpointed the next steps in driving improvement. It advocates that schools should sharpen the mathematical focus of monitoring and data analysis by senior and subject leaders; using the information gathered to improve teaching and the curriculum. It is evident to us that these principles can be used in all aspects of the curriculum, including the teaching of English and literacy.

76 The Department of Education¹³ advises that schools should develop the capacity to carry out really sharp and high quality data analysis that will enable schools, parents, and other partners to understand the system-level needs and how they can best be addressed.

¹³Action Research into the evolving role of the local authority in Education – Department of Education, Research report DFE-RR224, 26June 2012

77 We were given an example of a Leeds School where the collation and use of data and information enabled a system of effective pupil intervention and progress tracking to be introduced. This was one of the initial steps in the schools improvement, thereafter focus could then move onto teaching improvement.

78 We were advised that surprisingly that not all schools implemented a consistently rigorous regime of monitoring performance and progress, which we know is the basis for becoming self-aware and building improvement in the system. We acknowledge that the School Improvement Service endeavour to work with schools to ensure that robust recording and monitoring systems are in place, however not all schools are engaged with this support. We support the efforts of the School Improvement Service in its continued work in this area.

79 We were advised that maths and English subject leaders in Leeds primary schools are being assisted by the School Improvement Service to focus their own school data, including historical data, in order to assess future trends.

80 We sought clarity on what emphasis is placed on measuring progress at key stage 3 so that interventions can be put into place early, thus preventing the requirement for children to ‘catch up’ during their GCSE years.

81 We were advised that some schools in Leeds are now shifting their focus from looking at attainment data to the progress of children over a 5 year



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period. There has been much debate and discussion around this change in focus, which has involved the benefits of catching children in year 7 rather than their GCSE year. We fully support this change of focus as greater analysis of data at year 7 should facilitate better, more focused intervention at an earlier stage in a pupil's education and therefore stop their attainment prospects from deteriorating further during key stage 4.

Gaining Ground Strategy

82 The Gaining Ground Strategy was launched with a budget of £40 million (nationally) and ran for two years from September 2009 to July 2011. It supported school improvement in secondary schools that had reasonable to good GCSE examination results, but had poor progression rates in maths and English. The strategy comprised of four main strands focusing on:

- School-to-school partnership working
- Additional work from School Improvement Partners (SIPs)
- Additional training in Assessment for Learning
- Study Support¹⁴

83 Work was undertaken with 6 schools in Leeds. The strategy had clear impacts, including better use of data and systems for monitoring, tracking and evaluating pupil progress and the development of teaching practice, school leadership and school-to-school support. Pupils progressed in English and maths and school attendance increased.

84 We were advised the legacy of the strategy is that some key aspects are still being maintained, such as school-to-school partnerships. Focusing on student progress rather than just attainment and encouraging schools to maintain study support systems and 1:1 tuition.

85 We had the benefit of hearing firsthand about the positive effects that the Gaining Ground Strategy had provided at Priesthorpe School. Attainment improved and this improvement is being maintained. Gaining Ground raised the profile of maths and English, which gained whole school support from all subject teachers facilitating integrated maths and English in cross curricular learning. Pupils became aware of progress tracking, which created a culture shift with boys that has resulted in the erosion of the gender attainment gap. In addition there has been a reduction in the attainment gap for EAL and FSM pupils.

86 Regular meetings within the schools Senior Leadership Team have resulted in more collaborative working across different subject areas. Small and simple changes have been undertaken to move teaching from good to outstanding in lessons with some teacher support. Subject leaders have been given projects and training to create capacity and knowledge. The school is also working collaboratively with Brigshaw, which was described as 'refreshing', facilitating open and 'honest' feedback.

(See Recommendation 9)

¹⁴ Evaluation of Gaining Ground - Department for Education, Research Report DFE-RR216 June 2012



Conclusions and Recommendations

Every Child Counts

87 Every Child Counts (ECC) is a partnership between Edge Hill University and the Department for Education. It is an intervention program which aims to enable the lowest attaining 5% children at key stage 1 to accelerate progress in maths up to age related expectations. ECC teacher leaders provide training and support to accredited key stage 1 teachers in early mathematics and intervention.

88 Pre 2011 the program was government funded. Children received a one to one 30 minute daily lesson over a period of 12 weeks. Progress monitoring continued once the 12 week period concluded. A total of 43 schools in Leeds originally participated. Since 2011, 18 schools participate in the program which is now school funded. The criteria for delivery of the program are less rigid with schools deciding on the best intervention. Specialist teacher to children ratio can now be 1:3 with lessons being conducted 3 times per week minimum, rather than each day.

89 We were advised that the impact as assessed in April 2011 was considerable with children making accelerated progress of 17.8 months age gain, which continued after exiting the program. Attitudes to learning in maths also showed improvement. We noted with interest that specialist teaching works, the investment stays with children and that the principles can also be employed at secondary level.

90 It was highlighted that this program is expensive to deliver and each individual school decides if it wants to participate. The ECC scheme is a branded product

of Edge Hill University, however we consider that the principles utilised are evidentially effective and should be embedded into educational practice. We feel that there is potential to develop a scheme locally that schools could sign up to, utilising local teaching school alliances and skills within the Leeds family of schools to develop this.

(See Recommendation 9)

Vulnerable Learners

91 We were provided with an overview of the aims of the Closing the Gap Team. The team will be seeking to address the needs of vulnerable learners and challenge schools to ensure data trends (referred to earlier in this report) are changed, challenging school leaders to create focus on how they are closing the gap. The team recognise that there needs to be a focus on the methods and strategies that work and actually make a difference, and that good practice exists within the city which can be utilised.

92 Vulnerable learners, those at risk of being NEET¹⁵ and those not making successful transitions will continue to be a priority for the Closing the Gap Team, working closely with teaching schools and outstanding schools amongst others. In addition, the team will be brokering school-to-school support and looking at how schools link and work with the community.

93 We were advised of a number of key initiatives in place with the aim of raising ethnic minority achievement and raising attainment levels for EAL pupils, for example the **Arooj Leadership**

¹⁵ Not in Employment, Education or Training.



Conclusions and Recommendations

Collaborative and Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) Hub.

- 94 Arooj is a school lead project working closely with the local authority. The collaborative currently comprises of 13 primary schools. The aim of the project is to accelerate attainment for Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage pupils. The Arooj schools are supportive of each other as their pupils experience similar challenges. The collaborative has focused on the development of its curriculum, providing school-to-school support and developing teaching skills. Projects include creative writing competitions, resulting in year on year standards in writing showing an improvement.
- 95 Outstanding practitioners, including EAL teachers are partnered with teachers who need coaching or mentoring. This has not only developed skills but has also boosted confidence. Four of the schools within the collaborative have moved from a satisfactory Ofsted grading to good, with a greater percentage of teaching now assessed as outstanding. Data also identifies that attendance in Arooj schools shows an increase above Leeds and National levels.
- 96 We were advised about the success of parental engagement in the Arooj projects with some parents from hard to reach groups. This was attributable to using cultural themes within teaching, resulting in parents feeling more confident about helping their children. Some parents have approached schools to ask for help to support their children to learn. As a result and as parents want to learn about the learning techniques their children are using, parent classes
- are now being run at Pudsey Bolton Royd.
- 97 Parents have an important role in the development in their child's learning process. The success of the Arooj project in engaging parents from hard to reach groups demonstrates that parents will proactively become involved where the topic connects them to the curriculum. We believe that schools without a diverse cultural heritage can get parents involved by incorporating topics about their community values, heritage, history and culture into the curriculum. This can be developed and adapted to suit the locality and school population.
- 98 Following the principles of the London and Manchester Challenge, a strategy was produced to fit the needs and challenges in Leeds. We were advised that three EMA outstanding schools¹⁶ were identified as role models for other schools in similar challenging circumstances. So far support has been provided to 11 schools, which has included intensive partnership with other schools for a term and training days where staff went on mass for a day to work with and see an outstanding school. Following this the school in challenging circumstances then produces an action plan for improvement and progress is monitored.
- 99 We were given an overview of the journey of Moor Allerton Hall School with Arooj and the EMA Hub. The school has moved forward significantly with the support of St Bartholomew's by:

¹⁶ St Bartholomew's in Armley, Beecroft Primary in Kirkstall and St Peters CFE in Lincoln Green



Conclusions and Recommendations

- Building strong leadership based on St Bartholomew's model.
- Effective timetabling
- Quality of reading with bi-lingual reading. Rigorous reading programmes, intense reading. New teaching schemes and practices. On line reading, e-books
- Behaviour – right learning attitudes and managing behaviour.

100 This presents another example of the clear benefit of school-to-school partnerships and the development of teaching skills to manage learning programs.

(See Recommendation 9)

Funding

101 Schools are provided with specific government funding to invest in education and reduce the attainment gap. The Pupil Premium is additional funding given to schools so that they can support their disadvantaged pupils and close the attainment gap between them and their peers. Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium is given to provide literacy and numeracy catch-up support for Year 7 pupils. It will enable those pupils that did not achieve level 4 in reading and/or mathematics at Key Stage 2 to be given the opportunity to catch up as quickly as possible.

102 We acknowledge that each school has the autonomy to decide how pupil premium should be spent. However, we also believe that schools should ensure that premiums are invested to provide targeted maths and English support for pupils. We were advised that Ofsted will be undertaking a forensic examination of how investment is made and the

impact this will have on accelerating pupil progress. We consider that an element of challenge and focus should also be maintained by Children's Services to ensure that schools are making the necessary investment into maths and English programmes to meet their pupil's needs.

Leeds4Learning – A strategy for Learning Improvement

103 The draft Leeds4Learning strategy was presented to us to reinforce the intention of Leeds City Council to support schools in their search for excellence. The strategy has a clear focus on brokering and working with partnerships through school-to-school support, teaching schools and national, local and specialist leaders of education. The strategy replaces the 2010 policy.

104 The policy document reflects the ambition to provide high challenge and high support for schools, which is articulated through the learning improvement plan. We were advised that so far teachers have welcomed the clarity and directness of the document. The policy will be circulated to Head teachers, Chairs of Governors, Children's Services managers, Local Authority Partners and Unions to promote a wider understanding of strategic aims and objectives.

105 Following the implementation of the policy a review of schools will be undertaken in the autumn of 2013 to gain a clearer understanding of each school in the Local Authority area. Focus will include an analysis of how each school supports other schools in their locality and how they fit into their community. Work will also be



Conclusions and Recommendations

undertaken to develop the provision of data from schools which can be used to assess performance and inform improvement strategies.

Conclusion

106 During the inquiry evidence of good sector led improvement, school-to-school support and data management has been presented. However, this was not consistent across the whole of Leeds. We feel there is significant scope to improve and to ensure that everyone involved in the provision of maths and English education are doing what needs to be done. Whether that is leading change, delivering an improved curriculum, raising skills or challenging poor performance. Supporting pupils to achieve their full potential in maths and English must remain a high priority in order to secure their future success in adulthood.

107 Throughout the inquiry we have heard the description of unique and effective practice in maths and English on the ground, which has demonstrated reoccurring methodologies and significant positive outcomes for schools, teachers and most importantly pupils. Overall data still indicates that Leeds has a long way to go in order to see city-wide improvement in maths and English.

108 Strategies and initiatives such as Every Child Counts, Gaining Ground and Arooj have been focused around a small number of committed schools. The questions that were asked most frequently throughout this inquiry were, 'Why has learning and practice from these initiatives not been embedded across the whole of Leeds?' and 'What

can be done to ensure that this happens?'. We feel it is essential to use all the skills gained and the lessons learned to help ensure that the beneficial outcomes are adapted, expanded and embedded across Leeds. Although we acknowledge that not all schools would wish to participate of engage we consider that the success of these strategies should be celebrated and utilised as widely as possible.

109 The power of collaboration and partnership is key and we have received clear evidence that demonstrates how effective this can be. It is a powerful tool. Forming strong links with other schools and teaching school alliances has apparent benefits for all schools. It is clear not all schools are aware or engaged with the resources that will aid their development. Leeds City Council has a role in the positive promotion of the benefits of alliance membership and participation with teaching schools and the engagement of Specialist, National and Local Leaders in Education. We acknowledge that partnerships need to be carefully nurtured to ensure fully collaborative and supportive working and that Leeds City Council has a key responsibility in brokering and maintaining such relationships.

Recommendation 9 - That the Director of Children's Services reviews the intervention strategies and projects implemented in schools and school collaboratives across the City to identify successful outcomes. Plus, also investigates how, working collaboratively with schools, the effective processes can be expanded and embedded in the city to effectively narrow the gap in Maths and English attainment. The Director is requested to provide a progress report to the Scrutiny Board in April 2014.



Desired Outcomes and Recommendation Summary

Desired Outcome – To break to link between deprivation and low attainment by learning from schools that have achieved in challenging circumstances.

Recommendation 1 – That the Director of Children’s Services in collaboration with Cluster Partnerships undertakes detailed analysis of schools who are achieving in challenging circumstances to identify the source(s) and reasons for their success which may then assist other schools in similar challenging circumstances. The Director is requested to provide a progress report to the Scrutiny Board at the April 2014 meeting.

Desired Outcome – To improve attainment in Maths and English for vulnerable children.

Recommendation 2 – That the Director of Children’s Services undertakes an investigation and detailed analysis to identify the underlying issues that create barriers to achievement in Maths and English for vulnerable children in Leeds. The Director is requested to provide a progress report to the Scrutiny Board at the April 2014 meeting.

Desired Outcome – To ensure that all pupils attain a GCSE maths or English qualification which reflects their potential and supports their continued education or chosen profession.

Recommendation 3 – That the Director of Children’s Services scrutinises the early entry policies for maths and English GCSE examinations for secondary schools in Leeds to ensure that policies are not counterproductive to pupil attainment. The Director is requested to provide a progress report to the Scrutiny Board at the April 2014 meeting.

Desired Outcome – Improving the transition experience for pupils, to secure continuity of learning and improved maths and English attainment.

Recommendation 4 – That the Director of Children’s Services investigates the viability of collaborating with schools in the design and implementation of city wide standardised reporting format for feeder schools to provide consistent high quality information to secondary schools to aid the transition process. The Director is requested to provide a progress report to the Scrutiny Board at the April 2014 meeting.

Desired Outcome – Improving the transition experience for pupils, to secure continuity of learning and improved maths and English attainment.

Recommendation 5 – That the Director of Children’s Services facilitates dialogue and action at the appropriate level/forum to reinforce the importance of providing accurate and realistic pupil information to secondary schools throughout the whole transition process. The Director is requested to advise the Scrutiny Board of the proposed process for facilitating dialogue in the Directors response.



Desired Outcomes and Recommendation Summary

Desired Outcome – Understand the Local Authority support and interventions that are the most effective in improving the delivery of maths and English education.

Recommendation 6 – That the Director of Children’s Services evaluates the improvement in education provision as a result of traded service and School Improvement Service engagement and identifies which interventions and support are the most effective in driving improvement forward. The Director is requested to provide a progress report to the Scrutiny Board at the April 2014 meeting.

Desired Outcome – Ensuring that all schools in Leeds are aware of the resources and support that can be accessed to facilitate improved pupil attainment in maths and English.

Recommendation 7 – That the Director of Children’s Services investigates how the service can be effective in raising awareness about the benefits of Teaching School Alliance membership and making more extensive use of National, Local and Specialist Leaders of Education with Headteachers and Governors. The Director is requested to provide a progress report to the Scrutiny Board at the April 2014 meeting.

Desired Outcome – Identify the underlying issues that create barriers to learning and the practical action required to overcome the challenges currently in place.

Recommendation 8 – That the Director of Children’s Services investigates how Leeds City Council and the YorksITSA can utilise project funding to research Maths and English attainment in Leeds and the action required for improvement. The Director is requested to advise the Scrutiny Board about the progress of the investigation in the Directors response.

Desired Outcome – To utilise the principals learned via strategies and projects, implement and embed them in day to day practice across the city to facilitate improved educational outcomes for pupils in maths and English.

Recommendation 9 – That the Director of Children’s Services reviews the intervention strategies and projects implemented in schools and school collaboratives across the City to identify successful outcomes. Plus, also investigates how, working collaboratively with schools, the effective processes can be expanded and embedded in the city to effectively narrow the gap in Maths and English attainment. The Director is requested to provide a progress report to the Scrutiny Board in April 2014.



Monitoring arrangements

Standard arrangements for monitoring the outcome of the Board's recommendations will apply.

The decision-makers to whom the recommendations are addressed will be asked to submit a formal response to the recommendations, including an action plan and timetable, normally within two months.

Following this the Scrutiny Board will determine any further detailed monitoring, over and above the standard quarterly monitoring of all scrutiny recommendations.

Reports and Publications Submitted

- Presentation, overview of current school improvement provision in Leeds - Kevin Paynes and Vanessa Huws Jones, December 2013
- Annual Standards Report (Early Years Foundation Stage, Primary & Secondary Schools) - Director of Childrens Services, January 2013
- Presentation, The 2012 Annual Standards Report: key messages from the data analyses – Ian Stokes, January 2013
- Gaining Ground Presentation – Kevin Paynes, March 2013
- Presentation, Secondary Schools: Issues, Intervention and Support for English and Mathematics - Sarah Atkinson and Alison Yorke, January 2013
- Presentation, Yorkshire Inclusive Teaching School Alliance, March 2013
- Presentation , Accelerating progress for BME pupils in Leeds - Therese O'Sullivan March 2013
- Presentation, Strategies for Closing the Gap – Therese O'Sullivan and Marcia Harding, March 2013
- Presentation, The 2012 Annual Standards Report: Outcomes of children in vulnerable groups – Ian Stokes, March 2013
- Leeds4Learning - A Strategy for Learning Improvement – Director of Childrens Services, May 2013
- Presentation, Raising Achievement at Priesthorpe School - Martin Blacoe and Donna Welford, May 2013
- Moor Allerton Hall Journey with Arooj – Lesley McKay
- The Secret Garden – Case Study for Islamic Heritage Curriculum Development Project, Therese O'Sullivan 27 March 2013
- Mathematics – Made to Measure, Ofsted, May 2012
- Moving English Forwards – Ofsted, May 2012
- Action Research into the evolving role of the local authority in Education – Department of Education, Research report DFE-RR224, 26 June 2012
- Effective Pre-School, Primary and Secondary Education Project (EPPSE 3 – 14) Influences on students' attainment and progress in Key Stage 3: Academic outcomes in English, maths and science in Year 9 – Department of Education Research Brief, DFE-RB184a, January 2012



Witnesses Heard

Gail Webb – Head of Learning Improvement
Kevin Paynes – 11 – 19 Leadership and Management Lead
Martin Blacoe – Headteacher Priesthorpe School
Donna Welford – English Faculty Leader, Priesthorpe School
Keith Briggs – Senior Leader, Cardinal Heenan, Maths SLE
Simon Flowers – 11 – 19 Learning Lead and Headteacher, Carr Manor School
Sarah Ritty – 0-11 Learning Lead and Headteacher, Bankside Primary School
Ian Stokes – Performance Programme Manager
Therese O’Sullivan – Senior EMA Consultant
Marcia Harding – Closing the Gap Lead
Anne Fell – Senior Primary Improvement Advisor
Lesley McKay – Headteacher, Moor Allerton Hall
Viv Smithies – Deputy Headteacher, Pudsey Bolton Royd
Helen Laflin – School Improvement Consultant
Margaret McBride – School Improvement Advisor
Diane Reynard – John Jamieson Teaching School
Damian Chubb – John Jamieson Teaching School
Paul Brennan – Deputy Director, Learning Skills and Universal Services
Vanessa Huws Jones – 0 – 11 Lead for Teaching and Learning
Sara Harris – Primary School Improvement Advisor
Sarah Atkinson – Secondary School Improvement Advisor
Alison Yorke – Senior Secondary School Improvement Advisor

Dates of Scrutiny

Session 1 – 18 December 2012

The Current Situation

- Overview of current school improvement provision in Leeds
- Data headlines
- Primary Schools: Issues, Intervention and Support for Literacy and Mathematics

Session 2 – 30 January 2013

The Current Situation

- Secondary Schools: Issues, Intervention and Support for English and Mathematics
- School Standards and Data



Dates of Scrutiny

Session 3 – 6 March 2013

- Key outcomes and lessons learnt from Every Child Counts
- Role of Teaching Schools and accelerating positive change
- Key Outcomes from Gaining Ground – Evaluation Report Published June 2012, Department of Education

Session 4 – 27 March 2013

- Closing the Gap - Data Overview
- Closing the Maths and English Attainment gap – Approach and Outcomes, literacy and numeracy interventions/projects relating to the closing the gap agenda and what is being done address the issues.
- Raising Ethnic Minority Achievement. - Arooj project and the EMA Hub programme.

Session 5 – 7 May 2013

- Secondary Schools - strategies to improve English and maths
- *Leeds4Learning* - A Strategy for Learning Improvement



Appendix 1

Current Reality in Leeds – Presented to Scrutiny (Children and Families) June 2012.

Measure	Outcome	Leeds Position 151 LA' s
Average Deprivation	n/a	96
KS 2 % L 4 English & Maths	73%	95
Progression by 2 levels KS1-2 (Eng)	88%	19
5 A*-C GCSE	80.8%	69
5 A*-C inc Eng & Maths	53.7%	126
GCSE Average Point Score	483.6	41
Persistent Absence	7.4%	130/149
NEETs	8.3%	137

This demonstrates the position of Leeds when compared with 151 other Local Authorities.

**Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)
Raising Attainment in Maths and English
19 September 2013
Report author: Sandra Pentelow**



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