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## REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF EDUCATION LEEDS

**EXECUTIVE BOARD: 6 January 2010**

**SUBJECT: Annual Standards Report - Secondary**

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report summarises progress in secondary school improvement in Leeds, with a commentary on challenges for further improvement. Annexes include summaries of the outcome of recent Ofsted inspections, and details of trends of improvement for key indicators including for priority groups
- 1.2 Detailed information in relation to progress in schools in the National Challenge and those with focused and extended partnerships, designated as exempt under Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4(1) and (2), is available to members of the Board upon request

#### 2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Schools have improved strongly since 2001 but are facing particular challenges in 2009. These are grouped into three issues:
- The continuing drive to raise standards
  - Meeting the National Challenge for schools below 30% 5A\*-C including English and maths
  - The higher expectations of the revised Ofsted framework introduced in September 2009

#### 3.0 MAIN ISSUES

- 3.1 Two major challenges for raising standards are identified. One is concerned with increasing the number of young people with a good GCSE grade in English and in maths. The other is about improving the achievement of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, while acknowledging recent improvements for Looked after Children, those with special needs, and those from particular minority ethnic groups.

3.2 Many schools have responded well to the National Challenge and improved their results. There is a small number of schools which are unlikely to meet the target in 2011 or which do not attract sufficient pupils to be viable. Leeds City Council has agreed to consult on proposals to close these schools and to open two academies in East Leeds.

3.3 The new Ofsted framework, introduced in September 2009, is more rigorous and poses a risk to many schools. There are much higher expectations of several outcomes including attainment, behaviour and pupils' well-being. Some schools formerly judged 'satisfactory' are at risk of being judged 'inadequate'.

#### **4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 The Board is asked to consider:

1. the progress that has been made and be aware of the implications of the new Ofsted framework;
2. the future provision of support, challenge and intervention in Leeds as stated in the government white paper on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools..

**Agenda Item:**  
**Originator: Brian Tuffin**  
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**Electoral Wards Affected:**  
**ALL**

Ward Members consulted  
 (referred to in report)

**Specific Implications For:**

Equality & Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call-in

Not Eligible for Call-in  
 (Details contained in the Report)

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 This report summarises progress in secondary school improvement in Leeds, with a commentary on challenges for further improvement. Annexes include summaries of the outcome of recent Ofsted inspections, progress in schools in the and details of trends of improvement for key indicators including for priority groups
- 1.2 Detailed information in relation to progress in schools in the National Challenge and those with focused and extended partnerships, designated as exempt under

Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4(1) and (2), is available to members of the Board upon request

## 2.0 **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 By 2008, secondary schools in Leeds had enjoyed a long period of success. Standards had risen substantially across all indicators in the previous eight years, and the number of schools below the floor target of the National Challenge had been halved. Data from Ofsted inspections showed that the number of good and outstanding schools had increased. There were only two schools in an Ofsted category (i.e. a 'notice to improve' or 'special measures') and both were making good progress. Leeds started the new Ofsted cycle in September 2009 without any secondary or special schools in a category.
- 2.2 In 2009 we are still building on this improvement but the position is more complex and the future less certain. There are three particular issues that present an increased challenge:
- Standards measured by the most prominent and politically important indicator – 5A\*-C including English and maths – have ceased to rise incrementally and consistently. Progress in narrowing the achievement gap is mixed, with some success and some persistent issues.
  - The schools remaining under pressure from the National Challenge are those with the most complex circumstances for which urgent solutions are required.
  - The new Ofsted framework, introduced in September 2009, is more rigorous and poses a risk to many schools.

## 3.0 **MAIN ISSUES**

These three issues are explained below.

### 3.1 **Standards**

- 3.1.1 A detailed report on standards is presented in Annexe 3, but the main headlines are summarised below.
- 3.1.2 The strong rise in achievement at Level 2 (5A\*-C) at age 16 continues, with an increased of 63% to 67%, close to the national figure. This represents an extra 350 young people achieving at a level which offers a better route to further education and training. The improvement results from a different approach from schools which offer a personalised opportunity to students to take advantage of a broader curriculum. There is a different attitude in schools and young people towards success, and higher expectations of staff and students. This is combined with better tracking, guidance and support. In 2001 under 40% of Leeds students achieved 5A\*-C, a long way below the national figure. Eighty percent is a realistic target for Leeds for 2012
- 3.1.3 At 5A\*-C including English and maths the result for 2009 at 45.6% was 0.8% lower than in 2008. Although this still shows a 7% rise over 4 years, this year's performance is not in line with predictions or school targets. A few schools, including those with above average attainment and good systems for monitoring and tracking students, experienced a significant fall. Subject specialist consultants are helping schools review their practice around assessment in the core subjects and their response to recent syllabus changes and examination requirements. The outcomes in English and maths and the school's response to improving

standards will be the focus on this term's school improvement partner (SIP) visit, allowing a further city-wide review of progress at the end of this term.

- 3.1.4 The number of pupils not achieving any passes fell again in 2009, but there is scope for this to be halved again from the current position. The number of students gaining five passes (a significant indicator for progress to further education and training) improved slightly but still needs to be a continuing focus. This issue has definite links to attendance. Schools have been successful in reducing the number of students who are persistently absent by over a quarter since 2005/6, but there are still over 3000 students in this category, and 22 schools are identified for targeted support.
- 3.1.5 The success of students in care improved significantly with a doubling of the success rate at 5A\*-C from previous years. Over 90% received a qualification and nearly two-thirds achieved five passes or better. Looked after children have been a focus for challenge by school improvement partners (SIPs) and schools have improved their practice in monitoring progress and identifying appropriate support in partnership with other services. The performance of pupils on the special educational needs (SEN) register improved across the board, and particularly at 5A\*-C where success rates have nearly doubled since 2007.
- 3.1.6 This success is still not shared sufficiently by students eligible for free school meals. Only 16% achieved 5A\*-C including English and maths, compared with over 50% of other pupils. Five percent of students eligible for free school meals (FSM) fail to achieve a single pass compared with just one percent of other pupils. As well as allocating additional support to schools with high proportions of FSM students, the school improvement team is engaging schools in a 'narrowing the gap' project including groups identified by ethnicity and free school meals.
- 3.1.7 This kind of work with schools is having an impact on improving outcomes for students from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups, although success is not consistent. Groups performing below the Leeds average improved in 2009, notably Bangladeshi and Pakistani, and African groups. However, outcomes for Black Caribbean pupils were lower in 2009, and Bangladeshi pupils did not improve in English and maths. While we have some evidenced success in programmes that work with identified Black groups, we need to work with schools to ensure greater consistency. The 'narrowing the gap' collaborative group and the School Improvement Partner conversation are central to developing this improvement.
- 3.1.8 Improvement in value added measures is slow, but steady. City wide progress, measured by overall points scored at Key Stage 4 compared with Key Stage 2 outcomes, has improved steadily since 2006 from a very low base, but is still in the lower quartile. Further improvements to inclusion and ensuring a range of achievement at 5A\*-G for all pupils is a major element of further improvement. The distribution of schools across the contextual value added (CVA) scores remains broadly the same as in 2008. Although only 40% of schools are in the top half of the national distribution, this maintains the large improvement from 2005 and 2006 when fewer than 25% of Leeds schools reached this level.

## 3.2 **National Challenge**

- 3.2.1 A number of schools have met the challenge and succeeded. Of the fourteen schools originally selected for the programme, six have been above the floor target

for the past two years, and another two schools exceeded the target in 2009.

3.2.2 Six schools were below the floor target in 2009. Of these six, West Leeds High school and Wortley High School have merged in September to form the new Swallow Hill High School. The school faces a big challenge but also a rare opportunity of opening in a brand new building with a new leadership team. The National Challenge Adviser is helping Education Leeds to support the school with the urgent need to raise standards. South Leeds High school has closed and reopened as the South Leeds Academy, and there is confidence that the new leadership team will secure the progress to the floor target in the next two years. Carr Manor is a very good school with outstanding leadership, but the starting points of many of its students means that it has to make well above average progress to reach the 30% floor target. We are confident that pupils here have the best chance of improvement and would like to extend the very good practice to other students in this area of north Leeds. City of Leeds and Primrose High School still face major challenges to improve teaching, attendance, and behaviour as well as standards. Education Leeds has negotiated additional support for leadership which will improve outcomes in the short term. In the longer term, however, Education Leeds is to consult on the closure of the existing federation and its replacement with an academy and a 14-19 centre. One additional school, Parklands Girls High, has made very good progress under the leadership of its new acting headteacher and in partnership with another Leeds school. However, the declining roll and difficult financial situation presents an insuperable problem where cutting the financial input to a viable level would severely damage the prospects of the students already at the school. Education Leeds will consult on replacing the school with a co-educational academy.

3.2.3 The National Challenge has released some useful material on management systems, some of which was developed in Leeds, to strengthen schools' systems and ensure greater rigour in securing improvement in student achievement, particularly in the core subjects. Leeds national strategy consultants and school improvement advisers have helped schools to access these materials in an organised way and have worked with a wide range of schools, including those in the national challenge.

3.2.4 Education Leeds has also been able to use resources from another Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) project, 'Gaining Ground', to support six schools to make improved progress in terms of value added from Key Stage Two. Four of the schools have already made significant improvement in 2009, and the project will give them a focus to improve further. The schools have made good use of the programme arranging for increased academic tutoring for targeted students, and entering partnerships on a specialist area for improvement through the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. SIPs have supported schools in developing these plans. We are waiting for the DCSF to give final approval for three further schools to join this project.

### 3.3 **The New Ofsted School Inspection Framework**

3.3.1 Ofsted has been clear that the new framework raises the bar for all schools. Every school, whether judged previously as outstanding, good or satisfactory, will have to improve in order to retain that judgement. Although Leeds began this framework without any schools in an inadequate category, a large percentage – over half of schools – were satisfactory. This group needs particular support. The main risks for Leeds schools come from:

- New judgements on attainment and progress
- New criteria about the expectations of students' behaviour
- Aspects of student's relationships and supervision that affect judgements about safety and well-being

3.3.2 Schools must be judged as 'satisfactory' for achievement if they are to be satisfactory overall. 'Achievement' takes into account 'attainment' and 'progress'. Schools are graded as satisfactory for attainment only if they are at least broadly in line with national standards. There is no allowance for prior performance or the social or economic background of students. Decisions are based on the past three years of results. Many Leeds schools have not been at national averages over this period. Schools which are graded inadequate for attainment need to demonstrate 'good' progress in order to be judged as satisfactory for achievement overall. Currently Leeds has schools where progress is satisfactory, but raw attainment is low. The risk is that this will lead to an inadequate judgement.

3.3.3 Attendance is also judged against national norms. Levels of attendance in Leeds, although improving, have been below this level in many schools, and will be judged as unsatisfactory by Ofsted.

3.3.4 New criteria require pupils to show a consistent application to learning without significant intervention by teachers. Inspectors set very high expectations of pupil behaviour. Lessons judged as good under the old framework are now being judged as only satisfactory, and a number of formerly satisfactory lessons as inadequate. Advisers are helping schools to re-calibrate their internal evaluations. This work will be linked to the 'Behaviour Challenge' from the Secretary of State in which schools deemed 'satisfactory' by Ofsted for behaviour will be given additional training and support to improve standards.

3.3.5 Schools need to be very secure about their procedures for ensuring the safety of students and for supervising and making arrangements for off-site learning, monitoring absence and responding to pupils' concerns about relationships. Education Leeds is encouraging schools to pay more attention to developing procedures for listening and responding to the views of pupils and parents.

3.3.6 The timetable of inspections and increased monitoring of satisfactory schools means that over half the secondary schools in Leeds could be visited during this year. The more stringent criteria increase the likelihood that schools will receive harsher judgements in the short term. Some of the crucial judgements depend on data from the past three years, which cannot be changed.

3.3.7 With these criteria in mind the School Improvement Service has written to all schools to negotiate a renewed partnership under the School Improvement Policy. Nine schools - including specialist inclusive learning centres (SILCs) and pupil referral units (PRUs) - are in an extended partnership; two have recently been placed in special measures; others are at risk. There are 15 schools in a focused partnership of which five are a particular priority. These need to improve to avoid an Ofsted judgement of inadequate. All these schools have priority and additional support from Education Leeds. Task groups have been established to co-ordinate the support around the school's priorities, and include the school leaders and governors in monitoring and planning.

#### 4.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL POLICY AND GOVERNANCE**

4.1 The continued low performance of many minority and vulnerable groups means that tackling inequalities remains a very high priority for Leeds, and has strong connections with other areas of council responsibility. Improving standards is a core element of the 'narrowing the gap' agenda, and 'going up a league'.

## 5.0 **LEGAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The need to continue the improvement in secondary education and the scale of the challenge faced by a number of schools, particularly in inner Leeds, means that this must remain a high priority when allocating resources

## 6.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 The Board is asked to consider:

1. the progress that has been made and be aware of the implications of the new Ofsted framework;
2. the future provision of support, challenge and intervention in Leeds as stated in the government white paper on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools.

## 7.0 **Background Papers**

There are 2 annexes to this paper:

Annex 1 Ofsted Summaries

Annex 2 Data tables and commentary

The schools in Extended and Focused Partnerships report was used as background to this report.