Summary of the Borough’s Performance in the summer 2012 Public Examinations and National Tests – Primary and Secondary Schools

Report of the Corporate Director, Children’s Services

Open Report

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Summary:

This report provides a summary of the borough’s performance in national assessments and examinations from age 5 to 18. It provides information on trends, national and local comparisons and key issues.

Recommendation

The Select Committee is asked to note the report.

Reason(s)

The issues in this report are linked to the “Better Future” in the Council's Policy House theme, and specifically the following priorities:

- A borough with excellent and improving attainment through education and training.
- A borough with excellent schools, constantly improving and which are growing to meet the demands for pupil places.

1 Background

1.1 The current government national floor standards for attainment are:

- At Key Stage 2, 60% in the joint Level 4+ in both English and mathematics.
- At GSCE, 40% for 5A*-C including English and mathematics.

The intention is to further raise all the floor standards over time and to restrict the qualifications that are included at Key Stage 4, to only or mainly GSCEs.
The floor standards also include measures for levels of progress. Schools below the floor standards are at risk of being subject to structural interventions such as enforced Academy status.

The national problems this year around the changes made to grade boundaries in GCSE English between January and June have been well publicised. In Barking and Dagenham this has affected around 170 young people (8% of the cohort) who have achieved a grade D in English rather than the grade C forecast.

2 Primary Phase

2.1 Headline measures of performance in the Early Years Foundation Stage (by age 5) and Key Stage 1 (age 7) are improving steadily.

2.2 For five year olds the two priority areas of learning, personal, social and emotional development (PSED) and communication, language and literacy (CLLD) have both improved on last year’s performance by 2% and 6% respectively. 82% of pupils achieved 6 or above in all elements of PSED and 63% in CLLD. Both scores are slightly above last year’s average.

2.3 Another key indicator for the Early Years Foundation Stage is the percentage gap between the average score of pupils in the lowest 20% and the median (50th percentile). This narrowed further from 32% in 2011 to 30% in 2012 and is now in line with the national gap.

2.4 Level 2B remains the level children are expected to reach by the end of Key Stage 1 (age 7). The percentage of pupils achieving this level has improved well in reading, writing and mathematics. For the 3 areas the local authority performance remains in line with national average levels for 2012.

2.5 At level 3 or above (above average performance), there has been very slight improvement in reading and mathematics, whilst writing has remained the same. All are still below the 2012 national figures, by 4 percentage points in reading, 2 in writing and 3 in mathematics. Securing improvements at these higher levels including at L2A+, remains a key area for improvement within the local authority.

2.6 Outcomes at Key Stage 2 (age 11), have made substantial improvements, across all subjects at both Level 4+ and Level 5+. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 4+ in English and mathematics has improved considerably from 71% in 2011 to 78% in 2012. Nationally 79% of children achieve Level 4+ in English and mathematics. This shows the borough has narrowed the gap with the national to within 1%.

2.7 At Level 5 or above (above average performance), there has been strong improvement in all three areas: reading and writing are each up by 7 percentage points and mathematics by 4. However, national figures have increased at the same rate so we remain below the national by between 3 and 6%. As in KS1 securing improvements at these higher levels remains a key area for improvement within the local authority.

2.8 Two primary schools are below the government floor standard of 60% for the joint Level 4 or above in both English and mathematics. A further 9 schools near or below the floor standard in 2011 have made considerable improvements this year.

3 Secondary Phase

Headline indicators have continued to improve at both Key Stage 4 and Post 16 for the sixth year.
3.1 GCSE

- The headline A*-C including English and mathematics indicator has risen by 1.4% to 58.6%. This is a much more modest increase than forecast owing to the impact on five schools of the changes to English grade boundaries between the January and June examinations.
- This rise, albeit modest was greater than the national rise of 0.4% to 59.4%. As a result the performance gap has closed since 2011.
- The 5A*-C measure at 83.3% has risen by 2.1% and is above this year’s national average of 81.8%.
- Results in English and mathematics GCSE are above the national average - in mathematics for the first time.
- A and A* performance has improved by 1% against a 3% fall nationally. LBBD pupils are still well below the national on this indicator which is a priority for schools.
- Performance at A*-G has fallen.

3.2 GCE A Level / Level 3

- 2012 has seen another year of improving results, with the overall A*-C pass rate rising from 69% to 71% - beating last year’s previous best performance. This represents six years of improvement on this indicator.
- A*-C pass rates for A level saw rises of about 5% or more in 4 schools (Eastbrook, Eastbury, Jo Richardson and Robert Clack).
- A*-C pass rates for A level for one school (All Saints) is 78%. Another 5 schools are around 70% and above (Barking Abbey, Eastbrook, Eastbury, Jo Richardson, and Sydney Russell). This year’s national average was 77%.
- The overall A*-E pass rate also rose slightly to 98.5% - just below this year’s national average. One school (All Saints) maintained its 100% pass rate on this indicator for the fourth year in succession and three other schools (Eastbrook, Robert Clack, and Warren) also reached 100%.
- Top grades (A*/A) fell from the higher figures in 2010 and 2011; this followed the national trend which is also down slightly by 0.2%.
- The two main headline point score measures – average points per entry and average points per pupil which include equivalences - are both showing a drop compared to last year to 203.2 and 655.7 respectively. Both measures have also fallen nationally since 2011.

4 Priorities for the Borough

- Reaching national average performance in schools, where this has not already been achieved.
- Raising performance in lower performing schools to close the gap between highest and lowest outcomes for young people; eliminating performance below the KS2 floor standard.
- Improving the proportion of children and young people achieving higher levels and grades in national assessments and tests.

The three priorities above are well established and the improvement trend indicates that schools and local authority officers are working together effectively in partnership.