

11 November 2014		ITEM: 9
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Report on Headline Key Stage Results		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key	
Report of: Ruth Brock, Interim Strategic Leader, School Improvement		
Accountable Director: Carmel Littleton, Director of Children's Services		
This report is to provide an overview of standards across all phases in settings and schools based on provisional national tests and examination results for summer 2014.		

Executive Summary

Raising achievement in all areas of education has been a priority for a number of years and has seen considerable success in the last four years as attainment and progress has risen. Further strategies have been put in place as a result of the recommendations from the Education Commission Report, the impact of which has been to place the local authority in a strong position when in comparison with other statistical neighbour local authorities.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee notes the provisional outcomes of the summer 2014 tests and examinations and commends pupils, schools and parents/carers on their achievements.**
- 1.2 That the Committee recognises how the Education Commission recommendations and existing strategies have been best deployed to raise achievement and consider how these will raise still further across all key stages, especially at Key Stage 2.**

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 2.1 Meeting and exceeding the national average at all key stages has been a priority for the council for the past few years with the target of achieving outcomes in line with and beyond national at Key Stage 2, the priority for 2014.**
 - 2.1.1 As a result of intensive support and training for Early Years teaching and moderation in settings and schools, outcomes for Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are above national levels, as are GCSE.**

2.1.2 The report presents provisional data, giving an overall picture of the performance of settings and schools in summer 2014. It is important to note that, with the publication of validated data later in the year, there could be minor changes. A full report that drills down into the data for different groups of pupils will be provided in the New Year.

3. ISSUES AND/OR OPTIONS:

3.1 Early Years Foundation Stage (age 5)

3.1.1 The mechanism for assessing the levels of development for 5 year olds has changed markedly from previous years so it is not possible to provide trend data as with other phases.

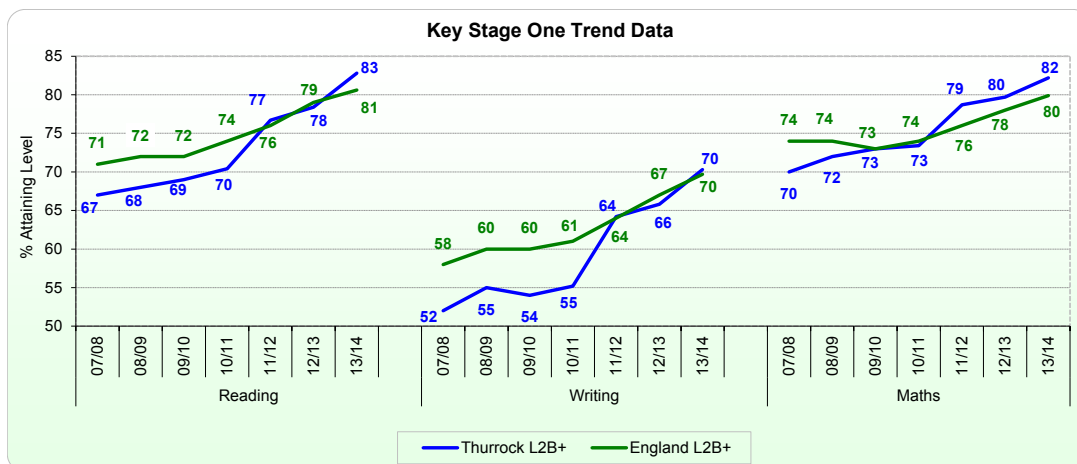
3.1.2 The Good Level of Development (GLD) represents the achievement of the Early Learning Goals, in the prime areas of learning and in literacy and mathematics.

	GLD 2013	Average Total Points 2013	GLD 2014	Average Total Points 2014
Thurrock (All)	53%	32.5	66%	33.7
- Boys	43%	31.3	49%	32.7
- Girls	64%	33.9	73%	34.6
National (Estimated)	52%	33	60%	33.6

3.1.3 To reach a percentage of children that make a good level of development, each child is assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals; whether she/he meets the level, has not yet reached the level or exceeded it and points awarded accordingly in a range from a minimum of 17 to a maximum of 51. If a child meets every Early Learning Goal, she/he will receive 34 points.

3.1.4 The provisional result for Thurrock is very encouraging. Pupils achieving a GLD increased by 13% from last year and currently this is estimated as being 6% higher than the National average of 60%. The Average Total Points has increased by 1.2 points which is more than the 1 point increase nationally but still 0.1 points below the National average. As referred to at 2.1.1, this is an outcome of significant investment in school improvement staff for this phase and expertise in training and supporting staff in schools and settings.

3.2 Key Stage 1 (age 7)

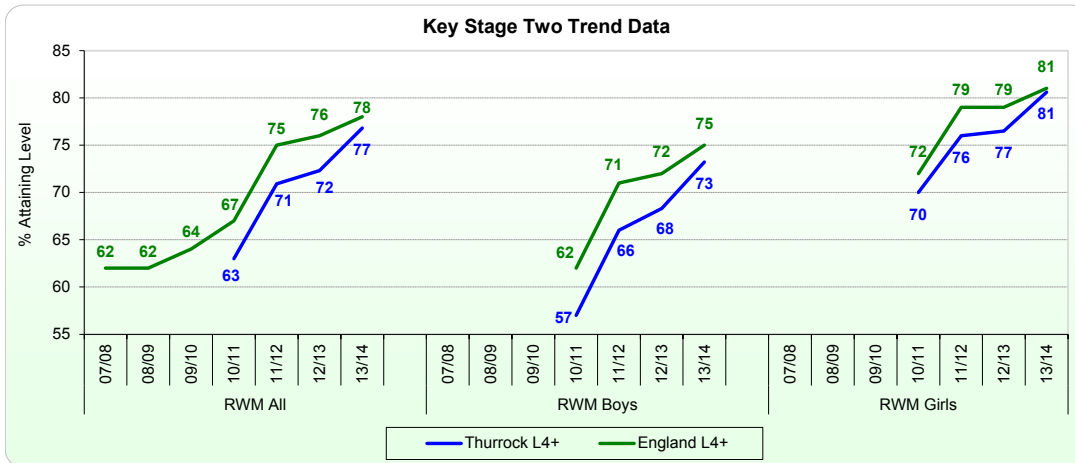


3.2.1 There has been no change to the benchmark measure for Key Stage 1 this year. Children are expected to achieve at least Level 2B+ in reading, writing and maths. Thurrock's outcomes for reading are above the provisional national figure and on a three year upward trajectory. In writing, they are 0.5% above national but also on a three year upward trajectory with a 4.5% increase on 2013. In maths they exceed the national figure by at least 2% for the second year running.

3.2.2 At all levels – 2+, 2B+ and 3+ – the majority of schools have demonstrated improvement. Where the gap with national persists is in the attainment at the higher level, 3+, across all 3 subjects but most notably in reading and writing. However, increases in the number of children achieving level 3+ in 2014 were considerably higher than the national increase.

3.2.3 This summer saw the third year of the Phonics check, undertaken at the end of Year 1. Thurrock children have made a significant leap to 76%, a 5% increase from 2013 and 2% above the estimate for the national result. This will help to underpin improvement in the standard of reading at the end of Key Stage 1 for the future.

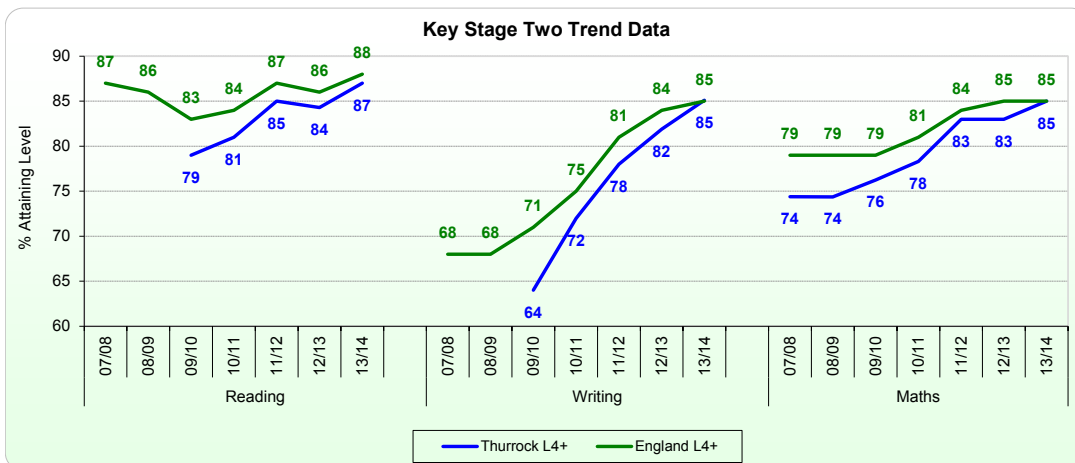
Key Stage Two (age 11)



3.3.1 The benchmarked standard at the end of the key stage has not changed since last year and measures the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4+ combined, the scores being aggregated in reading, writing and maths.

3.3.2 For the fourth year, there is an upward trend in combined subjects. The 4.5% improvement from last year exceeds the national rate and has closed the gap with national by 1.5% last year. Despite a considerable rise in level 5 achievement in reading and writing, there is a need to improve Level 5+ performance across all 3 areas and in particular in mathematics.

3.3.3 Boys' achievement has continued to improve, a welcome development. There are significant gaps between boys and girls across all phases. This will continue to be a focus for further research and identification of good practice to share across all schools.

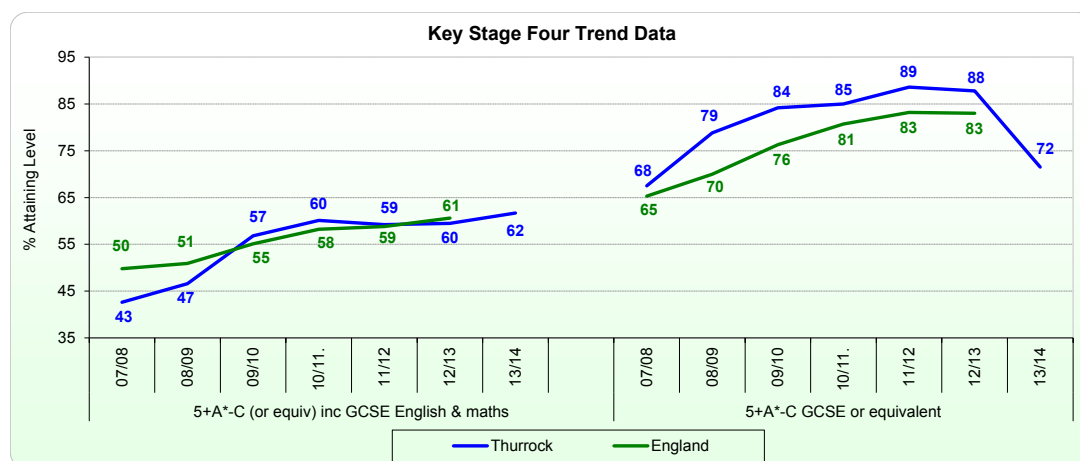


3.3.4 The graph above shows that the upward trajectory towards narrowing the gap with national continues, and at a faster rate than the country-wide rate. It is pleasing to note that writing – a key area of improvement focus for schools – has continued to improve by a further 4% narrowing our gap by 2%. While

the three year trend is good, it is important to increase even further the rate of improvement, so that reading, writing and maths are all above average rather than the 1% below provisional national figures.

- 3.3.5 This year saw the second year of a test for Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling. Thurrock schools' results were 2.5% below the national average. However, indications are that national results will have risen by 3% from 2013.
- 3.3.6 With the introduction of the new floor standard, no schools are below the floor standard at Key Stage 2. It is pleasing to note that this is the first time in at least seven years that there have been no schools below the government floor standard. Achievement in the floor standard has been set at 65%, a rise from 60% in 2013. The criteria for this achievement is that pupils must attain level 4+ in reading, writing and maths and progression by 2 levels in reading, writing and maths should be at or above the English median.

3.4 Key Stage 4 (age 16)



- 3.4.1 Thurrock schools have managed for the second year running, to increase the percentage of students attaining the benchmark measure of 5A*-C passes at GCSE including English and maths against a predicted fall in the national figure.
- 3.4.2 There continues to be a greater focus this year on the measure of 5A*-C passes including English and maths at GCSE only i.e. without the equivalent vocational or applied exams. It is encouraging to note that Thurrock's rate increased by 7%.
- 3.4.3 Another measure that is increasingly used to denote greater academic rigour is the percentage succeeding in achieving A*-C passes in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects comprising English, maths, sciences, humanities and a modern or classical foreign language. Commendation is undoubtedly due for the 2% increase in students achieving the EBacc which further builds on last year's 9% increase.

3.4.4 The range of results at Key Stage 4 is still too wide, spanning some 85 percentage points. Two academies are below the floor standard this year which has risen from one in 2013, although one academy is within one percentage point.

3.5 Key Stage 5 (post-16)

3.5.1 This is the second year that Level 3 results, both A level and vocational equivalents such as the BTEC Extended Diploma, have been reported in schools and academies in Thurrock. In 2013 there were 5 centres which has now reduced to 4, as Gateway academy closed its sixth form. From this academic year there are now 5 centres, including the consortium representing 3 schools. All centres have signed up to the UCAS Progress website which allows students to view and compare courses and apply online. They are now experiencing external interest to boost their numbers.

3.5.2 The pass rate for BTEC averaged 99%, with a healthy representation of the higher grades. Results for this year indicate that there is a drop since 2013 in some sixth forms. This will be analysed in greater detail when national benchmarking becomes available.

3.5.3 A more detailed report on post 16 results will be presented when national and statistic neighbour comparisons are made available.

3.6 Looked After Children (LAC)

3.6.1 At Key Stage 1 – 63% achieved level 2B+ in their SATs in reading, writing and maths combined. 75% achieving level 2B+ in reading, writing and maths separately. At Key Stage 2, 50% achieved the benchmark measure of level 4 for reading, writing and maths combined. 40% of this cohort had SEN and 25% of the cohort has a statement. At GCSE, two students from the cohort of 30 obtained 5A*-C passes including English and maths. A number of post-16 students acquired qualifications, too, at colleges and in training. Further analysis of these results will be presented in the Spring term.

3.6.2 Throughout the past year the system used for tracking the progress of LAC has been reviewed. The service is now commissioning a new tracking system allowing pupil progress to be tracked in a much more detailed way. This will allow the Headteacher of the Virtual school for looked after children to commission appropriate intervention for them. Following a tendering process, the current system will be replaced in the New Year by an interactive system used by many local authorities both large and small.

3.6.3 With the increase in funding for LAC via the Pupil Premium, a greater scrutiny of and support for schools' role in raising achievement for LAC is taking place. With the permanent Headteacher for Virtual School now in place, there are robust processes in place to ensure that targeted support is in place for all pupils and in particular in English and maths years 10 and 11. Arrangements have been introduced to release funding to schools when impact of the

designated Pupil Premium resource has been evidenced. The Headteacher keeps a close track of Personal Education Plans for our children and young people who are looked after.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 That Children's overview and scrutiny note the further work which has been undertaken to raise standards in education following the Education Commission Report and the Council's response to that report and draw attention to any areas for further improvement.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 The provisional results have been shared with Headteachers and Principals through Headteachers' Briefing and comment invited. A second report, with validated data and more detail of the performance of different groups in each phase, will be presented to Overview and Scrutiny in the spring term.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 This report relates to the council priority to improve the education and skills of local people.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Sean Clark**
Head of Corporate Finance

There are no direct financial implications in this report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lucinda Bell**
Education Lawyer

A duty is imposed on the Council by s13A of the Education Act (EA) 1996 duty to promote high standards and the fulfilment of potential.

S22(3)(a) of the Children Act 1989 imposed a duty to as amended by section 52 of the Children Act 2004. Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 imposes a duty on the Council to safeguard and promote the welfare of any child it looks after, and this includes a duty to promote their educational achievement.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
**Community Development and Equalities
Manager**

School attainment has a significant impact on equality levels between different groups. The spring term report will present more granulated data regarding the performance of key groups, including actions to address the gap in attainment between girls and boys.

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental

RISKS

- 7.4.1 Schools, including academies, that do not meet the floor standard are at risk of inspection by Ofsted and intervention by the relevant accountable body.
- 7.4.2 Any failure to raise standards would exacerbate recruitment and retention difficulties and make it harder for children and young people to reach age related expectations and to progress to further education, training and employment in the jobs that growth in the borough will generate. This risk is mitigated by scrutiny of the performance of each school and academy and subsequent action planning.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Pupils and those who support them in and beyond school are to be recommended for the progress that has been made this year. It is important that the good progress in many areas is now built on to ensure that in every subject, at every age, improvement which outstrips the national standard is made. Forensic analysis of data to target support and extensive use of school-to-school mechanisms in addition to interventions by school improvement officers and external consultants has proved effective.
- 8.2 Where schools have found it more difficult to improve standards a number of contributory factors may be identified:
 - continuing recruitment and retention issues at all levels
 - the quality of leadership and of governance
 - achieving a consistently high standard of teaching
- 8.3 In response, a number of strategies are already being adopted, such as working in partnership with and commissioning support from the Teaching Schools and engaging with more schools regionally in a systematic sharing of good practice. Support for governance has been given greater prominence with increased numbers of governors attending training leading to positive

comments from Ofsted inspectors in reports. The local authority as well as schools and academies themselves have also commissioned reviews of their governing bodies to drive and secure excellence.

8.4 The Education Commission report has made several recommendations in addition to those outlined above. These include:

- helping to build and communicate a compelling case for change and a powerful vision for education across the community in Thurrock
- redefining the role of the local authority and agreeing with partners what change means in practice
- growing the role of schools themselves as the leaders in supporting other schools to improve

8.5 Considerable work has been undertaken to ensure that the recommendations above are put in place. The introduction of the Thurrock Education Alliance and the delivery arm of this strategic body, the Thurrock Excellence Network, is enabling targeted and continued support.

9. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- None

10. **Appendices to the report**

- None.

Report Author:

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Children's Services, School Improvement