



Going for Gold

The Northamptonshire Children and Young People's Plan





Education, skills and employment

Key facts

- At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), when children are 5 years old, 58.1% of children achieved the threshold score. This represents an increase of 4.3% on last year and exceeded our Department for Education (DfE) target by 1.1%. In addition to these results the gap between the average for all children and those from the 20% most disadvantaged backgrounds has narrowed by 1.1% which exceeded the target set by DfE.
- Key Stage 1 attainment is above the national average in all subjects although there is a marked variation in attainment between districts and boroughs, with pupil attainment in Northampton significantly below the county and national averages in every subject. Learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN), or eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), 'Irish Traveller and Gypsy Roma' and Bangladeshi pupils noticeably underachieve compared to their peers.
- Key Stage 2 attainment is marginally below the national average in each subject. The attainment of pupils in South Northants is significantly better than any other district or borough and markedly improves the county average. SEN, FSM and black pupils significantly underachieve compared to their peers and these attainment gaps are larger than those nationally.
- 44% of children who are in care for more than 12 months achieved at least level 4 in English and maths at Key Stage 2, which although was above the national average of 36% was lower than the proportion of all pupils achieving this grade.
- At Key Stage 4 (GCSE, taken when pupils are 16), results showed improvement for the third year running. The number of pupils achieving at least 5 A*-C grades (including English and maths) rose by 2.5% to 51.5%. This is the first time that Northamptonshire has recorded a figure above 50%. The number achieving at least 5 A*-C passes but not necessarily including English and maths also rose, by 2% to 68%. Since 2007 our performance on 5A*-C (including English and maths) has risen by 9%.
- Post-16 participation has risen to unprecedented levels with 19,400 young people aged 16-18 recorded in learning in 2010. Not In Education, Employment or Training (NEET) figures have reduced as extra education places and support replaced job vacancies, which have fallen in a challenging economic climate. Retention at 17 needs to improve in some sectors to aid improvements in Level 2 and 3 achievement at 19.



Achievements and life chances of individuals in adulthood are strongly linked to experiences in their early years and at school. Every Child Matters: Change for Children in Schools (2004) states that "doing well in education is the most effective route for young people out of poverty and disaffection".

At each stage of nationally based assessments there remains significant variation in the attainment of pupils within and between schools across the county and similarly in districts and boroughs. In addition, there are at times marked differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils at each stage of learning. In particular, pupils who are looked after (LAC), pupils who are eligible for free school meals (FSM), pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and pupils from certain ethnic backgrounds are much more likely to underachieve compared to their peers.

At age 5, at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFSP), pupils achievements and developments are judged using the Foundation Stage Profile (FSP). In Northamptonshire, pupils

achieve above the national average and the gap between the median and the lowest performing 20% of pupils is gradually closing.

At age 7, at the end of Key Stage 1 (KS1), performance has improved over time.

At age 11, at the end of Key Stage 2 (KS2), although pupils progress and levels of attainment fall below the national average there is improvement in the levels of attainment compared to previous years.

At age 16, at the end of Key Stage 4 (KS4) for the first time in the county's history, over 50% of young people achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C including English and mathematics. This represents an improvement of over twice the national rate of improvements although outcomes remain slightly below the national average.

For the third year running, there was an improvement in the average point score per candidate for students taking level 3 qualifications (two A level passes or their equivalent), with the score rising by almost two points from 200.6 in 2009 to 202.4 in 2010. There was a slight decline in the average point score per candidate which dropped from 660.8 in 2009 to 652.2 in 2010. On provisional data Northamptonshire's average point score puts Northamptonshire 10th amongst our statistical neighbours.

The county has been successful in improving the number of young people aged 16 to 19 in education, training or employment and staying on rates are now within the national average. The total number of recorded 16-18 learners grew from 17,700 to 19,400 between 2008 and 2010 despite a fall in the overall cohort. More young people are achieving good A level passes and Level 2 and 3 qualifications although retention at age 17 needs to improve in some sectors. However, in these challenging economic times we recognise that good outcomes in this area will be more difficult to achieve, especially in relation to continuing to study and finding suitable employment beyond age 16.

Acceptances to Higher Education for young people aged under 20 grew by over 25% between 2001 and 2009. With a higher trend for young people from the 40% more socially deprived areas. Anticipated changes to policy will place emphasis on alternative routes to higher levels skills, alongside the traditional full-time degree, such as in the workplace, through apprenticeships, accelerated and/or flexible learning.

Pupil absence and permanent exclusions tend to be in line with or below the national average. However, exclusion rates in our academies are above those of maintained schools and the proportion of pupils experiencing fixed period exclusion is significantly above the national average.

4 Priority outcomes

Based on these figures, we have identified the following priority areas

Priority 1

Improving learner engagement, attainment, achievement and progress for all children and young people

Key facts

- There are about 694 children and young people aged 11 to 18 with a learning disability in Northamptonshire. Of these, approximately 278 may have a mental health problem.
- Between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, South Northants is the only district where a greater proportion of pupils make the expected progress in English and maths each year compared to the national average.
- The proportion of permanently and fixed term excluded pupils continues to be above the national average.
- 5.2% of young people were not in education, employment and training below the national average of 6.4%.



The Partnership aims to ensure that all children and young people in Northamptonshire continue to:

- improve their engagement with learning,
- make the best progress they can
- attain and achieve to the best of their ability

We recognise that there needs to be a particular focus on underachieving vulnerable groups, including Looked After Children (LAC), those with Special Educational Needs (SEN), those eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), some Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups and those for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL).

The aim is to close the gap between different groups performance at the end of each key stage. Outcomes of annual statutory tests, collected by the Local Authority (LA), show that there has been a steady improvement in outcomes overall at all key stages. However, the rate of improvement for some vulnerable groups of learners in past years has been lower than the national average. If the achievement of all pupils is to be improved and the

gap narrowed; there will have to be targeted support and earlier intervention for those identified vulnerable learners both at area and school level. Achieving this will raise the overall success rate of learners, and therefore schools, significantly.

Recent changes in national and local policy mean that the role of Local Authorities is changing and raising the achievement of all pupils is increasing the responsibility of schools. It is the responsibility of schools to ensure that barriers to learning for all pupils are identified and addressed by securing the additional support and resources that are needed from a range of agencies such as those represented on the Children and Young People's Partnership (CYPP).

As national and local policy is shaped and implemented, the County Council's Learning Achievement and School Improvement (LASI) division will gradually evolve to become an arms-length school improvement service, seeking to serve customers at both corporate county council levels as well as at individual school/ school-school level. This new service – LASI/ASPIRE will provide the statutory and regulatory functions required of all Local Authorities, undertaking detailed risk management of all maintained education providers with a focus on attainment gaps for groups of learners. Staff will challenge schools on the effectiveness of their provision, leadership and management and plans to secure improved outcomes for all learners. The data will be made available to the area teams and area improvement partnerships to inform the priorities for their work.

Education providers will need to work together to support all learners at risk of poor outcomes. For example, schools will need to address the provision of alternative placements for pupils at risk of exclusion. This includes commissioning alternative curriculum provision for students to avoid exclusion, providing professional development for staff and making sure staff are appropriately trained in and knowledgeable of an appropriate range of early intervention programmes for vulnerable groups. The emphasis is on schools providing their own solutions, seeking support, advice and training from other educational providers within a market led environment. The Local Authority is well placed to provide a brokerage service to schools in this new era, as well as being a service provider in some areas in its own right as a right-sourced school improvement delivery vehicle.



CYPP partners have access to a range of resources and support which could make all the difference to some individuals or groups of pupils. Through work with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), schools will be able to support pupils with mental health problems achieve and stay in education. The drug and alcohol team (DAAT) the Youth Offending Team and Community Health Services will also provide health education, counselling and support. Children's centres and extended services will also be supporting schools and this work will increasingly take place on an area basis to help them tackle local needs. The key focus for the Virtual School will be the raising of attainment and improving rates of progress for all LAC placed in and out of county with a focus on better Personal Education Plans and improved partnership working. Improvement in outcomes for all pupils will be measured through annual analysis of data for all key stages from early years to post 16 and the aim will be to continue overall improvement which targets the most vulnerable groups of learners closing the gap on their peers.



Post 16

There is close association between attainment and achievement in compulsory education and progression into further education, employment or training. During the last 6 years the proportion of 16–18 year olds in Northamptonshire who are Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) has reduced falling to just below the national average in 2009/10. However, at this time of economic challenge, the reduction has stalled and there is a risk that levels of NEET will increase. The current economic climate, local job opportunities and changes in the financial support for participation in learning have reduced incentives for young people to stay in education and training. To minimise the number of young people who are in this position action will focus on:

Reducing the flow becoming NEET (i.e. preventative)

Activity will take place in schools and colleges to ensure young people have access to good quality Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG). Supporting learning providers to achieve a quality kite mark will demonstrate the improving standards of CEIAG in our schools and colleges. Young people who are vulnerable will be identified whilst they are in education and support prioritised by joint activity between the school/college and Connexions Service. The data on children who are in care will be more closely linked to the specialist LAC service for this purpose. The Local Authority and the Connexions Service will also continue to work closely with schools to enable the proposed transition of particular statutory duties in the provision of CEIAG to be managed effectively in order to maintain high quality and consistent preventative services to those young people vulnerable to becoming NEET when they leave statutory education.

From September 2011 the Connexions functions will be brought together with other teenager preventative services into a new Community Interest Company to provide integrated services for young people. This company, which will come into being as part of the County Council's commitment to being a "catalyst, enabling authority" (Sustainable Communities Strategy), is intended to be more effective in providing a more complete range of support to young people and more cost-efficient through bringing together management and back office functions. Those who are developing barriers to learning will be assisted through integrated support, advice and guidance and will achieve better learning and life outcomes.

Re-engaging those who are NEET

To re-engage those young people who have become NEET Connexions will continue to undertake tracking work so that those in need of support can be identified. Specialist Choices Advisers (SCA) will work in the community to re-engage young people with available learning opportunities. Young people who are in care or are involved in offending behaviour will be prioritised for this support. An action plan is being developed for this.

Supporting groups who face greater problems in gaining further education, employment or training

With the support of the Corporate Parenting Board, children who are in care will be able to apply for employment opportunities and modern apprenticeships within the public sector. In addition, they will receive job seeking support and guaranteed interviews for identified opportunities. To improve the participation in learning of teenage mothers they will have access to child care at Children Centres and take up of Care 2 Learn will be promoted by the staff that who support this vulnerable group. This along with the expected replacement for Education Maintenance Allowance, which will be targeted to those with low household income, will also contribute to the Partnerships aim to reduce child poverty.



In order to deliver the right services in a more cost effective, innovative and needs-led way, the Partnership will continue to act as a catalyst to change and new ways of working as it has already done in relation to integrated area-based working. An example of this will be the development of LAS/VASPIRE Northamptonshire, a school improvement delivery vehicle, at arms length from the County Council. LAS/VASPIRE will deliver statutory and regulatory functions as well as provide bespoke advice, training and consultancy to education providers across the county.

LAS/VASPIRE will sit alongside the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) building on the area-based working model and securing formalised collaboration between children's services providers across the Partnership.

Key outcomes

Outcome 1

Continue to narrow the gap at the end of Foundation Stage (NI 92).

Outcome 2

Reduce the number of schools below Floor Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 (age 11) and Key Stage 4 (age 16) (NI 73, NI 75, NI 76, NI 78).

Outcome 3

Improved engagement, attainment, achievement and progress for learners who are deemed to be vulnerable, including LAC, pupils with SEN, pupils with EAL, pupils from BME groups and pupils eligible for FSM (NI102a, NI102b, NI104, NI105, NI107, NI108).

Outcome 4

Improved attainment and achievement by looked after children (LAC) at all Key Stages (NI99, NI100, NI101).

Outcome 5

Increased engagement by 16–19 year olds from vulnerable groups in Education, Training or Employment (NI110, NI117, NI 148).

Outcome 6

Improved performance at Level 3 Qualifications (NI 80).

Outcome 7

More children and young people are able to benefit from their learning environment through reduced absence, fixed term and permanent exclusions (NI 114, NI 87, LOT 3(1), LOT 3(2)).