

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

13th March 2012

Report of the Strategic Director for Children & Younger Adults

Derbyshire Performance Premium - Key Stage 4 – (Education)

1. **Purpose of the Report**

To seek approval to the creation of a “Derbyshire Performance Premium” from the centrally held element of the 2011-12 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) to support closing the attainment gap and raising standards in Derbyshire’s maintained secondary schools at Key Stage 4 (KS4).

2. **Information and Analysis**

At its meeting on 13th December 2011, Cabinet received a report on the standards of attainment in Derbyshire schools and the resultant gap analysis. The key points relating to KS4 were as follows:

- Standards of attainment in Derbyshire remain good overall and are generally above or close to national outcomes at each key stage.
- Derbyshire has matched last year’s highest ever increase of 5 percentage points in the number of pupils achieving 5 A*-C passes at GCSE. Attainment has improved by 2 percentage points at 5A*-C including English and mathematics (5+EM) and is in line with national and similar authority outcomes.
- All secondary schools are above the new national Floor Standard of at least 35% of pupils achieving 5+EM.
- The performance of the most vulnerable groups has improved but is variable across schools, subjects and key stages. The attainment of children entitled to free school meals (FSM) and those in care, in line with national performance, remains low.
- Variation in the performance of some schools and those causing concern requires improvement to ensure pupils make progress in line with county improvement trends.

The Gap Analysis at KS4 showed:

- In some schools there remains excessive variation in attainment between the two benchmarks at 5A*-C and 5+EM.
- Although attainment is improving across almost all key measures in Derbyshire, the rate of improvement is slightly less than that seen nationally.

- The attainment gap between the full cohort and the vulnerable groups remains significant, with the performance of children entitled to FSM and Children in Care requiring accelerated improvement.

Subsequent to the report to Cabinet in December, our performance out-turn has been audited by the DfE who confirms that our percentage point increase is 3.4%, broadly in line with the national average.

In analysing Derbyshire's data there are three key challenges to address when compared against the national picture, namely: English and Maths attainment and progress; closing the gap for vulnerable groups and the English Baccalaureate results. Although the English Baccalaureate is not a qualification in its own right it does include many of the "key subjects" that are a significant feature of the new Ofsted framework. Lower performance in any of these key subjects will, therefore, affect not only schools' English Baccalaureate percentage but also their potential Ofsted outcomes.

The prime responsibility for raising standards lies with individual schools. However, budgets are somewhat tighter than previous years' and students have one main chance of achieving their potential. Key Outcome 3 (Improved attainment by all children at all ages) in CAYA's approved Service Plan includes the following actions:

- Improve the attainment of all children at the end of each Key Stage;
- Improve rates of progress for vulnerable groups, including children entitled to free school meals; and
- Improve attainment and quality of provision in targeted priority schools where progress and attainment are below expected rates.

Cognisant of these objectives, it is proposed that a "Derbyshire Performance Premium" be introduced to help maintained schools with KS4 pupils raise standards. The Premium would offer schools up to £20k on submission of a brief plan showing how this funding would be used to raise standards and attainment for KS4 this year. The Premium is only available to Derbyshire maintained schools as academies have already taken a share of these budgets on conversion.

Successful bids would have to demonstrate how the Premium would support the key performance challenges referred to above, namely: English and Maths; progress and attainment of vulnerable groups or English Baccalaureate outcomes. Schools' bids would be assessed by the Deputy Assistant Director (Education Improvement) and individual allocations approved by the Strategic Director.

3. Financial Considerations Potentially bids for funding, which would be for one year only, could be received from 33 maintained secondary and 10 special schools. The maximum that any school could be awarded would be £20k, hence the maximum one off total cost would be £860k. The central DSG budget is forecast to underspend at the end of 2011-12 by around £6m. DSG funding is ring-fenced and has to be used for the benefit of schools and related support services. Much of the spare DSG capacity will be needed in the future to minimise the impact of falling rolls and the consequential loss of DSG

funding. However, the cost of the proposal for 2011-12 could be met from within existing central DSG budgets.

4. Other Considerations In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: prevention of crime & disorder, equality of opportunity, human resources, legal & human rights, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.
5. Key Decision? Yes.
6. Background Papers DfE First Statistical Releases for National Curriculum Assessment held in the Information Unit in Children & Younger Adults.
7. Strategic Director's Recommendation
That Cabinet approves a Derbyshire Performance Premium for 2011-12 to support schools with Key Stage 4 pupils as set out in the report.

IAN THOMAS
Strategic Director for Children & Younger Adults