

School Improvement Strategy 2015-2017

Every school at least a good school



West Berkshire
COUNCIL

Foreword

Dear colleagues

I am delighted to write the foreword for our 2015-2017 School Improvement Strategy.

Our previous Strategy placed significant emphasis on developing and supporting leadership, alongside strengthening governance. Throughout, our focus remains on children, including those from disadvantaged groups, and how we can, together, relentlessly aim our attention and endeavours on ensuring they have the best possible development and learning experiences to achieve their potential. Ambition is key, and we all need to be ambitious about outcomes and what is possible. As well as providing a clear strategy that we can all buy into, we need to get the balance of support and challenge right, we need the best possible leading, teaching and governing, which is one of the reasons we have given specific emphasis to CPD and recruitment.

It is my strong view that we can achieve more together, working in partnership and using school to school support as a huge strength and resource. We have some outstanding practice in West Berkshire schools and need to spread this as widely as possible. We also have a strong commitment from West Berkshire members to Education, demonstrated by their allocation of significant additional funds across 2013-2017 to support our School Improvement Strategy.

The strategy is comprehensive, but simple – ensuring that all our schools are at least ‘good’ and all children make maximum progress, achieving their potential. Children need to feel and be safe, challenged by learning they enjoy and happy in schools.

Ian Pearson

Head of Education

West Berkshire Strategy for School Improvement 2015-2017

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Every School at least a Good School

School Improvement Strategy

1. Introduction and national context

This document sets out the vision, aims and ambition for West Berkshire schools 2015-2017.

West Berkshire has strong partnership working with schools and that continues to be a unique feature against a backdrop of significant change for local authorities (LA) and schools. The vision of the strategy will be delivered in partnership with schools.

In the last three years, a shift in national educational policy and funding has resulted in increased autonomy and greater diversity of schools' provision (academies, free schools, studio schools) as well as the development of a school led system leadership to promote school improvement.



Schools are also moving through a period of very significant change in terms of qualification reform, a new testing system across all phases and a more stringent Ofsted regime.

One of the most significant reforms is to the assessment system and the removal of national curriculum levels.

All of the proposed changes will emphasise the progress pupils make, and especially the progress of the most disadvantaged pupils.

The Department for Education (DfE) has stated that the new assessments will be more challenging and that the majority of schools will be required to achieve the increased expected standards over time or they will be considered to be “coasting” or failing schools.

West Berkshire Council has made a strong commitment to continue to invest in education to achieve ambitious goals. The local authority School Improvement Strategy, supported by additional funding from the council, is being delivered to schools as the key means of:

- raising achievement for all pupils and closing the educational gap for disadvantaged pupils
- targeting support and challenge to schools which are underperforming and “at risk” of a judgement of requiring improvement or inadequate by Ofsted
- improving the leadership of teaching and learning
- supporting schools to be able to sustain their own continuous improvement
- supporting schools to support each other to improve.

2. Local context

West Berkshire currently has 82 schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) across all phases of education. This includes two nursery schools, plus a variety of independent schools and private or voluntary providers delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage. The EYFS curriculum is also delivered through our maintained schools and academies. In the primary phase a mixture of 66 schools of primary, infant or junior type provide learning through Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Twenty of these schools are small primary schools in rural villages with less than 100 pupils on roll. Most of these are church schools.

Secondary Education is provided by nine 11-18 comprehensive secondary schools and one 11-16 school. Special education is provided by two 2-19 special schools, plus provision in specialist resource units on mainstream sites. Provision for pupils out of mainstream is currently provided by the Alternative Curriculum and Reintegration Services: both are led by a headteacher and together operate across 6 PRU sites. Five of the 10 secondary schools are converter academies; one secondary school has become a sponsored academy with another currently in the process of being sponsored. Two secondary schools have become the sponsors for a primary school academy each. There are currently no converter academies in the primary phase.

3. The vision for West Berkshire schools

The overarching vision for West Berkshire schools is very straight forward. It is our ambition that every school should be at least a good school and for many to be outstanding. This vision applies to all schools with West Berkshire children whether they are maintained schools or Academies. For every child, irrespective of background, to fulfil their potential through all schools providing excellence in education and through schools supporting each other to improve. In particular, disadvantaged pupils need to achieve as well as their peers. This vision is underpinned by the recognition that schools need to be able to recruit a high quality workforce to provide outstanding teaching and learning so that all pupils make good progress.

4. The role of headteachers in driving improvement

Outstanding schools have outstanding leaders and the development of excellent leaders and governors at all levels is key to building successful schools. Only leaders with the highest aspirations will succeed in “closing the gap” for every child. As a priority in the School Improvement Strategy, West Berkshire is committed to providing access to high quality leadership professional development for leaders at all levels to ensure that:

- newly appointed headteachers have a quality induction programme with an allocated mentor
- school leaders have the skills to accurately monitor and evaluate the work of the school and identify the right priorities for improvement
- school leaders have rigorous performance management procedures and will challenge underperformance
- school leaders at all levels can analyse performance data to review strengths and weaknesses

- school leaders have clearly articulated approaches to maximising professional learning opportunities at school and at individual level
- school leaders take note of what research says about “What works well” in school improvement
- school leaders are “outward facing” and understand how collaboration can bring about improvement
- school leaders are “leaders in learning” and promote a clear vision for improvement which is highly ambitious for all pupils.

Increasingly, headteachers have a greater role in supporting schools to improve. West Berkshire is fortunate to have National and Local Leaders in Education who work in partnership with the Local Authority.

Since the launch of the previous School Improvement Strategy 2013-2015, there are now two established Teaching Schools and Teaching Alliances in West Berkshire who work in close partnership with the West Berkshire School Improvement and Governance Team to help schools make further improvement. Supporting the development of school to school support is a key driver in the new School Improvement Strategy. There is also an Early Years Teaching Alliance which is a cross-Berkshire alliance of nursery schools from which local schools can access support.

5. The role of governors

School governance is a demanding voluntary role, undertaken by individuals from a range of backgrounds and occupations. Operating within a legal framework which has an ever increasing and changing range of statutory functions, governance is required to fulfil three core responsibilities:

- ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school
- holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of the staff
- overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Governors’ Handbook (DfE)

The DfE and Ofsted consider governance an integral part of school leadership and the work and overall effectiveness of governance is inspected and reported upon within the leadership and management component of inspection.



In order to support governors, who freely give their time and skills, high quality professional training and support is essential. This will ensure that effective, informed governing bodies operate in all settings as a result of:

- clear leadership provided by the Chair
- effective and efficient clerking that facilitates the smooth running of the governing body
- Individual governors being trained and current in their thinking and understanding.

The strategy is committed to:

- ensuring that governing bodies receive appropriate support, intervention and guidance dependent upon individual context
- providing a comprehensive and incremental training programme for all governors, Chairs of Governors and clerks that they understand and discharge their respective roles effectively and efficiently
- providing comprehensive and current resources, publications, systems and support mechanisms such as mentoring so that governance is effective
- actively promoting and building peer to peer support systems between governors, clerks and governing bodies to promote and share good practice, develop links and utilise expertise, skills and experience effectively.

Since the launch of the previous strategy, two chairs of governors have been designated as National Leaders of Governance (NLG), and six chairs of governors have been designated as Local Leaders of Governance (LLG). Supporting the development of governor- to -governor support is a key component of the governance aspect of the strategy.

6. Teaching and learning

All pupils in West Berkshire schools are entitled to be in receipt of the highest quality teaching, in a challenging curriculum which motivates and engages them so that they learn well. Successful teaching will also contribute to the development of confidence and independent learning. To achieve this, teachers need to have very good subject knowledge and a sound understanding of how pupils learn. The National Curriculum has “raised the bar” in schools and provides a great opportunity for schools to look carefully at how well they provide sufficient challenge for all pupils.



As a key driver in the School Improvement Strategy, West Berkshire will work with partners to support schools in improving teaching and learning through:

- high quality induction and mentoring for Newly Qualified Teachers
- devising, in partnership with the Teaching Alliances, a coherent Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Pathway programme which will cover each stage of career development of teachers and teaching assistants

- work with school leaders to encourage teachers to take more responsibility for their professional development through the introduction of the LA “CPD Passport”
- providing access to high quality training and support in all aspects of Assessment for Learning strategies
- provide targeted support to raise achievement in mathematics in primary schools through the “Enriching Mathematics Strategy”. A range of approaches will be used with a cluster of schools and will also include “buddying” with schools with strong practice in mathematics
- repeat the successful Tribal Effective Teaching and Learning Programme
- to continue work underway with National Curriculum Best Practice Schools
- encourage the use of research to inform teachers’ practice, especially through the work of The Sutton Trust
- use LA intelligence to support the identification of best practice and to work with the Teaching Alliances in growing Specialist Leaders in Education.

7. Recruitment and retention of teachers

As part of the LA review of the 2013-2015 School Improvement Strategy, schools were asked to cite barriers to further improvement. The inability to recruit teachers of good quality was felt to be a significant barrier to improvement by the majority of schools. Further in-depth research was undertaken across the LA by the education marketing company Grebot-Donnelly to find out what the recruitment and retention issues were and what strategies could be used by the council and by schools themselves to improve the situation.

Some of the most concerning findings were:

- over half (55%) of respondents in the online survey indicated that they are considering leaving teaching within West Berkshire in the next five years
- in West Berkshire, cost of living/housing and lack of London salary weighting were seen as the major factors negatively impacting on teacher retention
- a higher proportion teaching at secondary level/subjects were considering leaving than at primary level
- most schools have found that retention problems have been more significant with their younger members of staff, with many leaving after two to three years.

Recruitment into teaching has now reached a national level of concern. Securing the recruitment and retention of teachers is therefore an important strategic aim in the School Improvement Strategy. As part of the Recruitment Strategy, West Berkshire will work with schools to:

- support the development of the microsite “Teach West Berkshire” which promotes the benefits of living and working in West Berkshire, simplifies applications to schools and make use of an applicant tracking system to encourage future applications
- provide access to “market your school” workshops
- work with headteachers and governors on agreed incentives and approaches to attract teachers to West Berkshire

- provide a coherent CPD Pathways programme and CPD Passport to encourage retention
- consider ways in which teachers could access housing more cost effectively than at present.

The microsite addresses are:

www.teachwestberkshire.com

www.teachwestberkshire.co.uk

8. Overarching priorities 2015

Priorities in this School Improvement Strategy have been influenced by the increased expectations of Ofsted, what our performance data tells us about where we need to improve, the growth of academies and our need to work productively with a range of external partners, and also the encouragement for schools to work together and take collective responsibility for training and improvement.

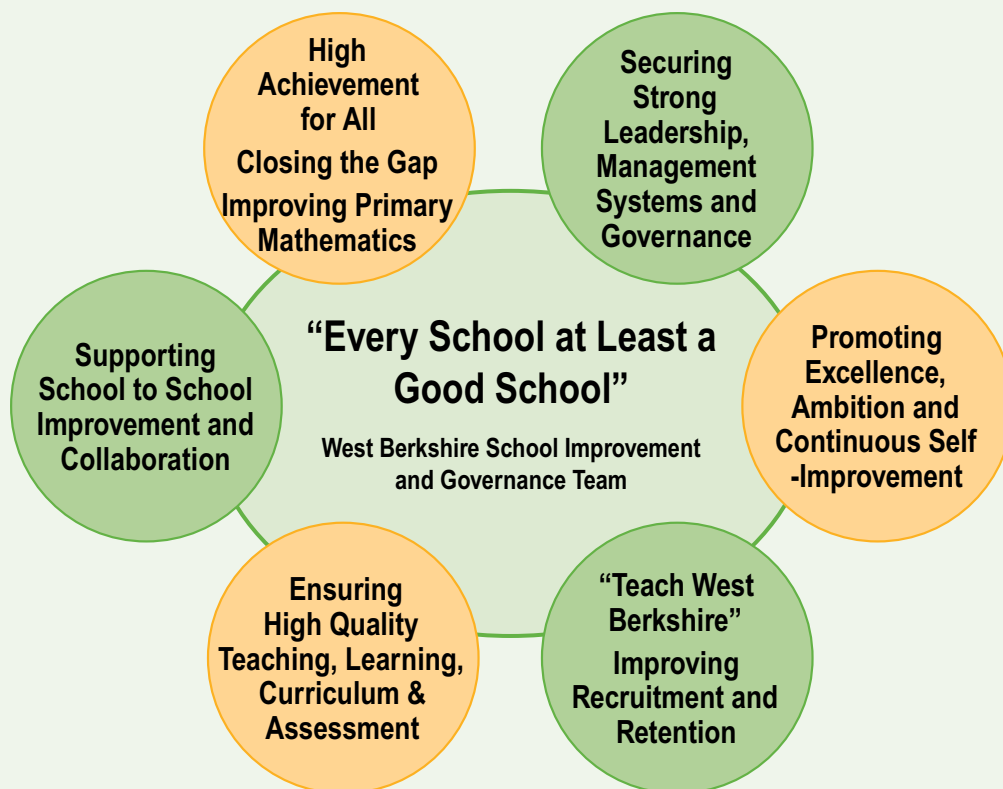
Given the local and national context, the following key priorities have been identified under the heading of “Every School at least a Good School”:

- ensuring at least 89% of schools, including Academies, are rated by Ofsted to be at least a good school by 2017 and all schools judged to be good by 2020. No schools to be considered inadequate. To raise aspirations for all schools and increase the percentage of outstanding schools to 21% by 2017
- to improve performance outcomes, especially in primary mathematics, so that West Berkshire is consistently well above national standards in primary and secondary education in the new headline performance measures which will be introduced in 2016. The goal is to be securely placed within the top 25% of national performance against national expectations by 2017 and to improve to top 10% by 2020
- to close the gap for disadvantaged pupils in each phase of education, especially pupils entitled to free school meals and those with special educational needs. The gap to be reduced year on year to smaller than national by 2017
- to secure strong leadership, management systems and governance across all West Berkshire schools so that Ofsted judgements are all securely good or better
- to further develop school led improvement and school to school support so that the Teaching Alliances in the east and west of the LA continue to grow and that the Newbury/Thatcham centre has also developed strong collaborative partnerships
- to ensure that West Berkshire schools provide a challenging, enriching school curriculum with teachers who provide high quality learning experiences and accurate assessment for learning. To introduce a CPD Pathways Programme and CPD Passport for teachers and to promote the work of the Sutton Trust in encouraging a research based approach to school improvement
- to improve recruitment and retention to West Berkshire schools to ensure a quality workforce and high levels of recruitment of good teachers.

The priorities and how we are going to tackle them can be summarised in the following poster:

West Berkshire School Improvement Strategy Overview 2015-17

Key Priorities



Core SIA Monitoring, Support and Challenge to Every Maintained School
Additional Support and Training linked to Ofsted Category and Individual Needs

How Will We Do It? Service Level Agreement and Prospectus of Support

Buy-Back Support Packages for maintained schools and Academies– set out in the Prospectus of Support

Brokerage of Tailored External or School to School Support
National and Local Leaders in Education and Governance
The Downland Alliance of Schools
The Berkshire Alliance of Schools

How Will We Do It?

High Achievement Closing the Gap Improving Primary Maths

- Pupil Premium Strategy
- Improving Schools Programme (ISP)
- Enriching Mathematics Strategy
- Early Intervention in at risk schools
- Raising Attainment Plans
- SLA Data Packages
- Maths/English/ Assessment/PP Networks

How Will We Do It?

School to School Support

- Partnership Work with the Teaching School Alliances, SCITT and the National College of Teaching and Leadership
- Primary and Secondary subject Networks
- Deployment of Leaders in Education & Governance
- Oxbridge Collaborative Group
- Link Groups
- Brokering S2S support through the SLA
- “Buddy Schools” in mathematics and writing

How Will We Do It?

Teaching, Learning Curriculum & Assessment

- CPD Pathways & CPD Passport
- Tribal Teaching and Learning Programme
- Assessment Networks and Moderations
- Curriculum Pilot Schools
- Assessment for Learning CPD
- Pupil independence & resilience
- Promoting the NACE Challenge Award
- Promoting Sutton Trust Research

How Will We Do It?

Improving Recruitment and Retention

- LA Teacher Recruitment Strategy
- “Teach West Berkshire” microsite
- LA CPD strategy with key partners
- Market your school workshops
- Recruitment packs/recruitment fairs
- Social media workshops
- CPD Pathways & CPD passport
- Governor recruitment strategies

How Will We Do It?

Excellence & Self Improvement

- Support rigorous self evaluation
- Promote challenging targets
- Learning from research in schools
- Systematically share good practice
- Good to Outstanding Programme
- Leadership Forums and Workshops
- Recruit more SLEs LLEs NLEs NLGs LLGs
- Provide high quality CPD
- Supported self Reviews

How Will We Do It?

Securing Strong Leadership and Governance

- Leadership & Governance Strategy
- Good Induction for new HTs & Gobs
- Comprehensive leadership training
- Leadership Workshops
- Governor CPD and Supported Audit
- Growing leaders at all levels
- Joint leadership & governance reviews
- School Improvement Management Board



9. The School Improvement and Governance Team and role of the School Improvement Adviser

The School Improvement and Governance Team are responsible for the delivery of the School Improvement Strategy. The team is composed of a core group of School Improvement Advisers (SIAs), a Governance Improvement Adviser and curriculum advisers.

Each maintained school has an allocated SIA whose role is to ensure continuous improvement in schools through effective monitoring, challenge and support to school



leaders and governors. The SIA will work with the school leadership to identify the key priorities for the school, based on an accurate self evaluation of the provision in the school and an analysis of key performance data. At each termly visit, the SIA will check the school's progress towards meeting its priorities. The SIA will also broker support for the school to help it meet its priorities within the timescale set. This core entitlement of visits to all maintained schools is funded by the council.

In addition to the core SIA support, all maintained schools have a full core package which covers key statutory requirements and strategic elements for school development and improvement. This core package is outlined in full in the Prospectus of Support for West Berkshire schools and includes:

- support for short listing and appointment of new headteachers
- support for induction and mentorship of new headteachers
- advice on school to school support
- support for statutory data returns
- statutory assessment procedures e.g. moderation and standardisation
- support for NQT induction and assessment
- access to advice and support on pupil and school performance data.

10. West Berkshire's Service Level Agreement with schools

Additional support for school improvement is delivered through a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with schools. The SLA underpins the overall School Improvement Strategy and school improvement is delivered through the SLA in varying routes.

Through the SLA 'Value Package A', Primary schools can purchase five days additional support and Secondaries an additional two in addition to an enhanced data package which also includes governor support for headteacher performance management.

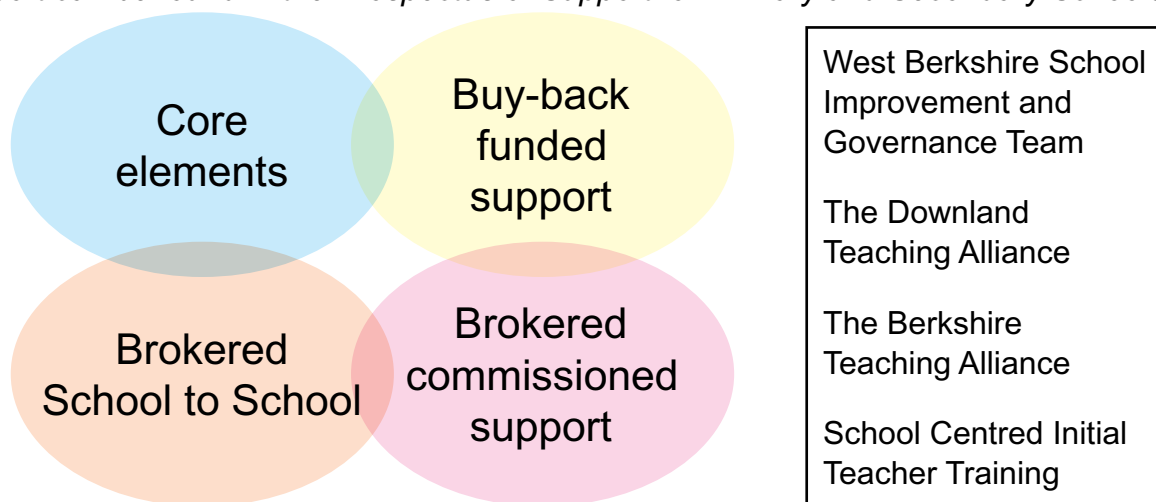
Schools can also buy back tailored support packages set out in a prospectus. Some support will also be externally commissioned. The SLA also provides brokering of school to school support so that schools can help each other to improve. Increasingly, this support comes from the Teaching Alliances through the agreed deployment of National, Local and Specialist Leaders in Education.

10.1 Governance Service Level Agreement

All maintained schools also have access to the core package provided by Governor Services, which covers the Statutory Responsibilities of the Local Authority in support of effective governance. The Core Offer also makes provision for additional support for Governing Bodies when concern arises or specific interventions are required. Comprehensive training, support and guidance for governance are provided through the wider SLA which governing bodies can purchase.

Service level agreement

More detailed information about the Service Level Agreement and School to School Support can be found in the Prospectus of Support for Primary and Secondary Schools



11. Performance of West Berkshire schools

The overall picture from trends over the last 4 years is one of general improvement in outcomes across the primary and secondary phases in the key indicators for 11 year olds and 16 year olds. The areas which are not yet consistently above national scores include primary mathematics and closing the gap for disadvantaged pupils in all phases in education.

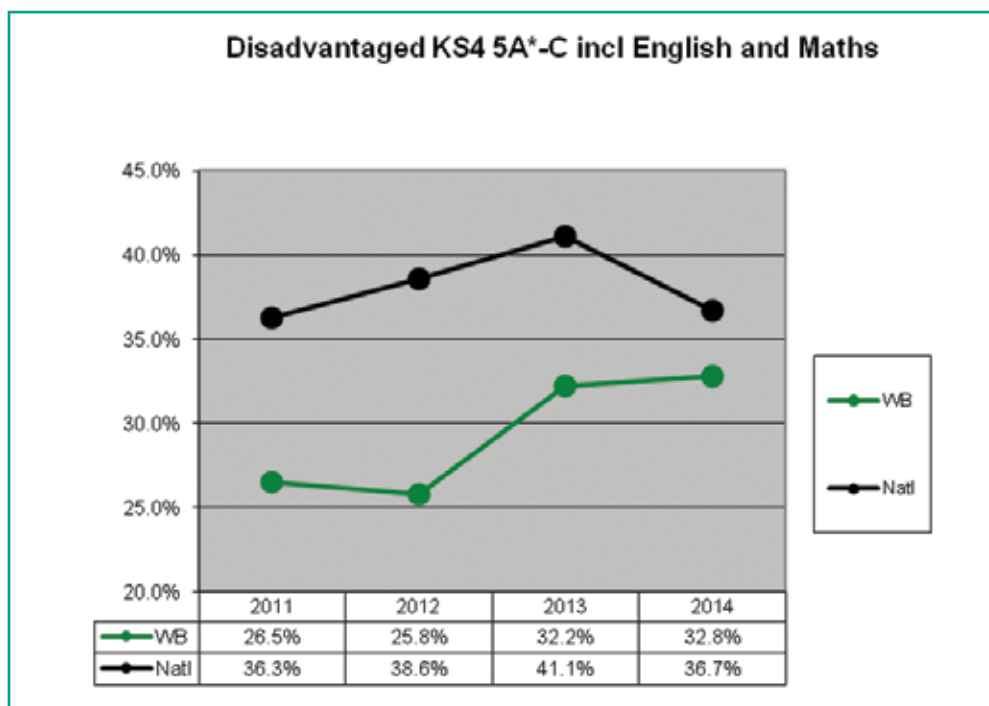
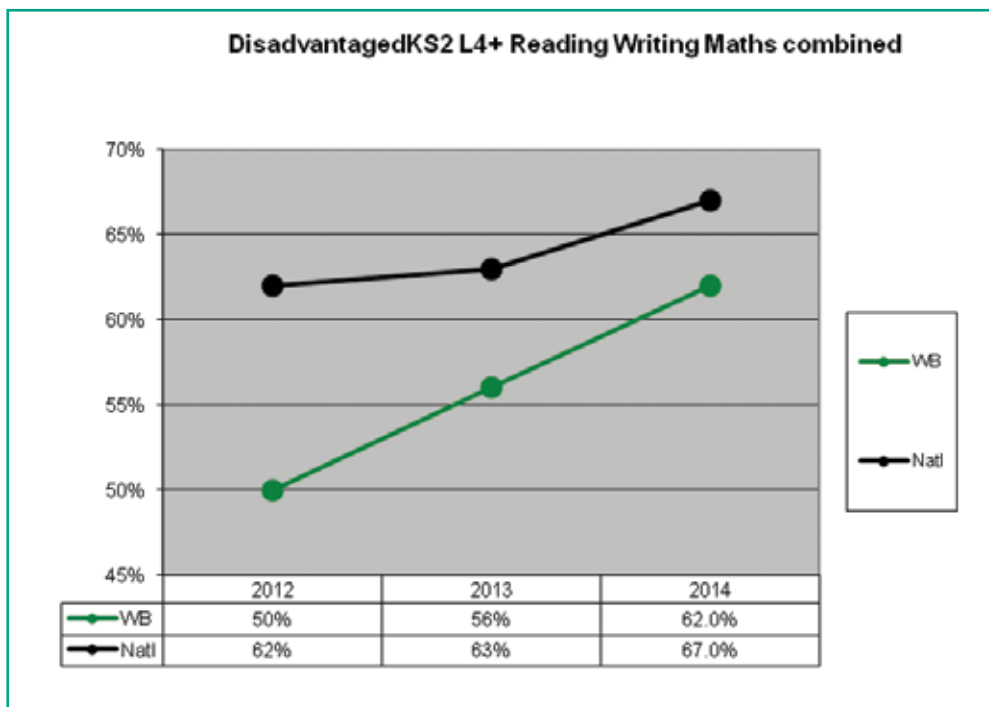
11.1 Improving outcomes and closing the gap for disadvantaged pupils

The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is small compared to national figures, but the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is too wide. However, the picture is improving and in the July 2014 Ofsted report “The pupil premium: an update” West Berkshire was cited as “one of the most improved LAs” in closing the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. Targets set to close the gap have been met, and in most cases, exceeded. However, this continues to be a key priority improvement area in every phase of education as there is still much to do to improve outcomes for these pupils

at every stage in education and especially in outcomes for 11 year olds in mathematics. More also needs to be done to close the gap in secondary schools where a number of schools have gaps above the national gap in the key indicator of 5A*-C GCSE including English and mathematics.

The improvements in closing the gap have come about a result of the LA Pupil Premium strategy which forms part of the wider School Improvement Strategy. West Berkshire schools are working hard to secure better outcomes for these young people.

11.2 Primary phase performance



Performance for 5 year olds achieving a good level of development in Early Years Foundation Stage continues to be very high and among the top performing LAs nationally. However, more needs to be done to improve scores in writing and for pupils who are summer born.

Results in the year 1 phonics test for 6 year olds, which was introduced in 2012, are broadly in line with national results. More needs to be done to raise scores higher, and especially the performance of boys.



Results for 7 year olds continue to be above average in key indicators and show steady improvement over time, but with more mixed performance at the higher levels and especially in mathematics. To ensure KS1 teachers' assessment scores are accurate, the LA has more recently increased the number of moderated schools, including moderation of all infant schools. Results

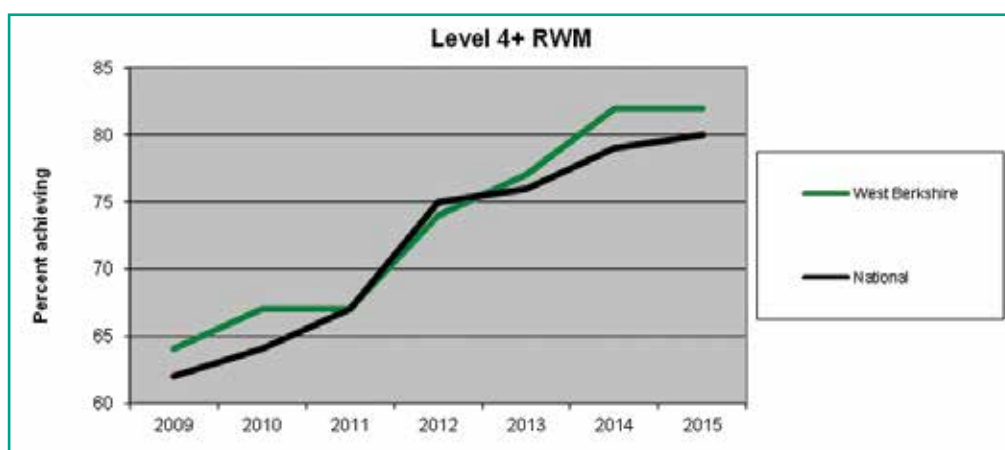
show that boys continue to outperform girls at the higher levels in mathematics and girls outperform boys in all indicators in reading and writing.

There has been a general trend of improvement in attainment in KS2 outcomes for 11 year olds in the key indicator of Level 4 reading, writing and mathematics (L4RWM) to above the national expectations. Reading and writing scores are consistently above national expectations, but results overall have reached a plateau in 2015 due to a dip in performance in mathematics.

Results for high attaining 11 year olds at Level 5 are consistently above average, and especially in above in reading and writing where they are well above national scores. The number of pupils achieving at Level 6 is above national scores in reading, writing and mathematics. Girls outperform boys in reading and writing.

Rates of progress from 7 year olds to 11 year olds are broadly average in reading with 90% making 2 levels of progress, and in writing with 94% making 2 levels of progress. More improvement is needed in mathematics where 85% make 2 levels of progress.

The key improvement areas identified in the primary phase are:



- closing the educational gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers
- improve phonic scores for 6 year olds to securely above national scores
- improving boys' writing scores to match that of girls for 5, 7 and 11 year olds
- ensure all pupils make good progress from 7 to 11, especially in mathematics
- improve scores in mathematics for 11 year olds to securely above national scores
- improve scores in Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling, especially for boys.

11.3 Secondary Phase performance

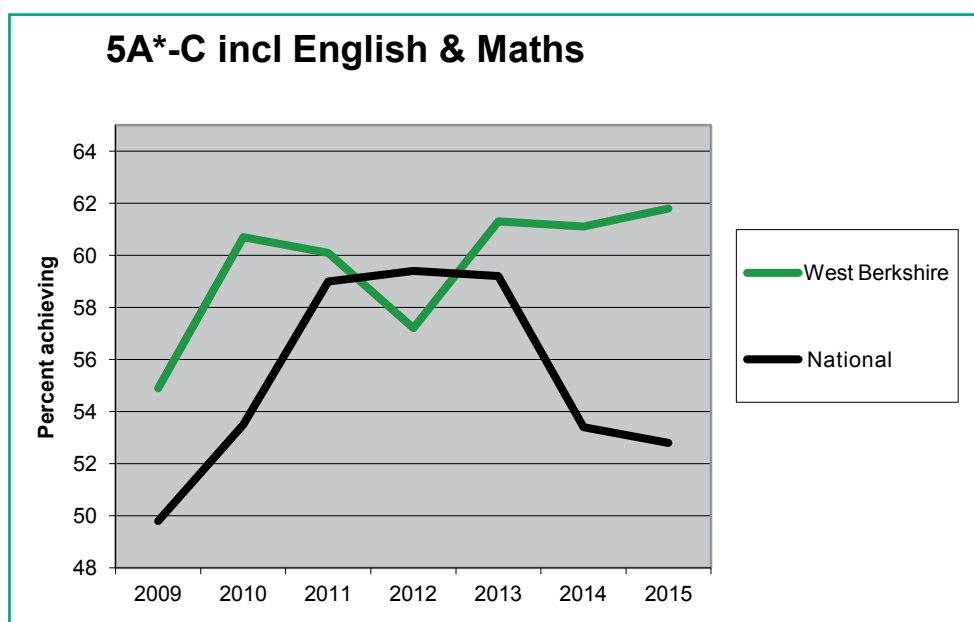
Attainment for 16 year olds has made good improvement over time in the key indicator of 5A*-C GCSE including English and mathematics to well above national expectations.

Performance for 16 year olds in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) also continues to be very strong and well above national scores. The EBacc is the combined GCSE performance of an “academic core” of subjects and will be a key measure in the GCSE curriculum reforms. This means that West Berkshire schools are well placed to be successful in the new reforms.

Progress measures across secondary are also good. In both mathematics and English, progress measures for 11 to 16 year olds are consistently above national scores.

The proportion of West Berkshire resident young people (aged 16-18) recorded as not in education, employment or training (NEET) remains low, on average below 4%, in comparison with national and statistical neighbour averages (around 6%). Employment opportunities for young people in West Berkshire are considered good, with increasing numbers of opportunities being supported with accredited training.

The key improvement areas in the secondary phase are:



- to continue to close the educational gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers
- continue to increase the performance of high attainers for 16 year olds
- to sustain good progress rates for all pupils through consistently good or better teaching
- to have consistently good or better performance across all secondary schools so that all schools are securely above national expectations
- to ensure that, in the light of national changes to the assessment systems, transition information and processes from primary school to secondary school enables pupils to access a curriculum which is appropriate to their level of knowledge, skills and understanding.

12. Inspection outcomes

Ofsted, the official body for inspecting schools, has introduced a more stringent inspection framework. The bar has therefore been raised for schools where the acceptable standard is now a judgement of “good”. Any school which is judged to be requires improvement and which has not improved within four years to reach good will be judged to be inadequate. The DfE has also identified that schools which are identified as “coasting” will also be under additional scrutiny from the Regional Schools Commissioner.

The DfE have outlined in statute that schools which are judged to be inadequate will be normally be expected to become a sponsored academy and, in effect, taken over by the academy sponsor or chain. In such cases, the LA will look for first for local solutions, working actively with the DfE, governors and sponsors to do so. However, the main goal of LA work will be to keep all schools on track to be good or better.



Currently, 76% of West Berkshire schools are judged good or better by Ofsted, the school’s inspectorate, which is below the national proportion of 82%. It is the ambition of the LA to have 89% schools judged good or better by 2017 and all by 2020. It is expected that the current figure will continue to rise as schools currently judged requires improvement are reinspected and move to good.

The percentage of schools judged outstanding is 15% and the ambition is to raise this figure to 21% by 2017 which is above the national score of 20%. However, as Ofsted continues to “raise the bar” with schools, a judgement of outstanding is a harder task.

Currently, there are no schools in West Berkshire judged to be inadequate. A major success of the previous School Improvement Strategy is that, since its launch in March 2013, no school has been judged inadequate in any inspection. This bucks the national trend and is a result of additional challenge and support provided to schools through monies provided by the council to support the School Improvement Strategy.

13. Working with Academies and other partners

The local authority acts as a “champion” to ensure that the needs of all children and young people are met, irrespective of where they are educated. To achieve the council’s ambitious goals, all schools need to achieve high standards, and especially for the most vulnerable pupils. Whilst our relationship with Academies may be different, we have good working partnerships through a range of routes e.g. through the service level agreement, headteacher forums, data sharing arrangements, subject networks, assigned School Improvement Advisers, funded activities linked to the school improvement strategy and through the Teaching Alliances. We do not distinguish between maintained schools and Academies in our ambition that “Every School is at Least a Good School” and we endeavour to work in partnership with all schools, and share good practice across schools through collaborative working. We will also challenge underperformance in Academies where pupils are not achieving as well as they should.

The LA also has strong working partnerships with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth and the Church of England Diocese of Oxford and we work together to improve standards for pupils in their schools. We will also work with these partners to being about a successful transition to either converter or sponsored academy where the need arises.



14. The LA Framework for School Improvement

The LA school improvement framework provides additional support and challenge proportionate to need.

Key strategies and approaches



Challenge and Support

Systematic monitoring, challenge and support to every maintained school by the SIA to ensure schools make continuous improvement. “A Preventative Approach.”

Additional support to targeted schools which are not yet securely good through the Improving Schools Programme, the Primary Enriching Mathematics Strategy and bespoke leadership and governance support.



Professional Development

Providing all schools access to high quality professional development and subject expertise to school leaders, teachers, teaching assistants and governors in a coherent CPD strategy.

Additional targeted support to secure good teaching through the Tribal Effective Teaching and Learning Programme, English and Mathematic networks and targeted subject specific support.



Collaboration

Working in partnership with the Teaching Alliances to support schools to support each other to improve. Sustaining and developing existing Link Groups, secondary networks and subject specialist networks.

Providing network Links outside the LA. e.g. Good to Outstanding Programme for secondary schools. Brokering additional support from National, Local and Specialist Leaders in Education and National and Local Leaders in Governance.

14.1 Policy of school categorisation of support

Within the process of evaluating the overall performance of each school, the LA will agree a categorisation with the headteacher and Chair of Governors which identifies the amount of external support the school will require over the next academic year. The additional support is at no cost to schools and is funded by West Berkshire Council as part of the School Improvement Strategy. The LA keeps the categorisation of schools under continuous review by monitoring SIA Core Visit reports and through Focus Groups which bring key officers together from across the Council twice per year, to evaluate the circumstances of each school and exchange key information on school performance and development.

The LA will monitor the progress of schools not yet judged good and schools causing concern through The School Improvement Management Board (SIMB) and Progress Meetings with the Head of Education and Joint Principal Advisers. The School Improvement Management Board is led by the Corporate Director and its membership includes the Portfolio holder for Education, the Head of Education, and Senior LA officers from School Improvement, Governance, Finance and Human Resources. There is also headteacher representation on the Board.

School categories A and B receive core support of 3 visits. The support is based on a risk assessment of the school against a detailed set of criteria which is closely aligned to the Ofsted Framework but also includes local needs and circumstances, as well as safeguarding arrangements. The categories are grouped from A (outstanding) to D (inadequate). Categories A and B receive core support of 3 visits. Categories below that range receive from 3 additional days to up to 20 additional days. The support can be summarised as:

Category A	Outstanding	Core support of 3 days
Category B	Good	
Category BC (a)	Good with additional needs	Up to 3 additional support days and additional governance support
Category BC	Good but at risk of RI/ coasting	
Category C (a)	Good but at significant risk of RI	Up to 15 additional support days and additional governance support
Category C	Requires Improvement	
Category CD	RI and limited capacity to make rapid improvement Two subsequent Requires Improvement judgements	Up to 20 additional support days and additional governance support
Category D	Inadequate	Up to 20 additional support days and additional governance support. Consider a move to sponsored academy



14.2 Schools causing concern

Due to the increased expectations for schools to be “securely good” and for improvements to be made at a rapid pace, all schools graded below B are reviewed on an 8 weekly cycle. Schools are also recommended, where appropriate, to have an external review of governance or use of Pupil Premium. The LA also undertakes external reviews of Finance and Health and Safety. Schools also undertake an annual Safeguarding audit.

Schools which are at risk of a judgement of requires improvement, or are currently judged as requires improvement currently but are deemed to have the capacity needed to make further improvement will typically enter the **LA Improving Schools Programme** with termly or 6 weekly Raising Attainment Plan (RAP) meetings. Each of the school’s RAP meetings are chaired by LA officers with monitoring information passed to the Jt. Principal Adviser and then at corporate level to the School Improvement Management Board.

Depending on the risk assessment, school leaders and chairs of governors may also be issued with a general letter of concern and required to meet more formally with the LA at “Call in” meetings to discuss their plans for improvement. If progress against improvement priorities are not sufficiently rapid, then the school may drop to a low category (CD) and a “**Formal Advice Note,**” will be sent and this will trigger entry into the formal LA Monitoring Programme of 6 weekly Progress Meetings. A formal advice note can be triggered not only by concerns about school performance, but also concerns about safeguarding, poor attendance or concerns about school finances. Governing Bodies are also required to submit Minutes of FGB meetings to the LA during this period.

14.3 Issuing a Warning Notice

West Berkshire’s approach is to identify schools **where there are increasing performance concerns at an early stage** so that rapid progress can be made to prevent

a judgement of inadequate and to quickly move to category C, with a clear timescale in order to achieve category B. If rapid progress is not made, then the school will drop to category D and a **Warning Notice** will be issued.

The LA will act decisively and issue a **Warning Notice** to the governing body of a maintained school where one or more of the grounds in section 60(2) (a-c) of the 2006 Education and Inspection Act are satisfied:

Issuing a warning notice

- unacceptably low standards of performance
- serious breakdown in the way a school is managed or governed that is prejudicing (or likely to prejudice) standards of performance (including financial management)
- the safety of pupils or staff is threatened.



“Unacceptably low standard of performance” could include: standards below floor; low standards achieved by disadvantaged pupils; a sudden drop in performance; sustained historical underperformance; poor rates of progress or performance of a school not making the expected standards of comparable schools.

A warning notice may also be issued where schools have not responded robustly or rapidly enough to a

recommendation by Ofsted to commission an external review of the use and impact of the Pupil Premium and/or and external review of their governance arrangements. A warning notice may also be considered where a governing body is failing to deliver one or more of its 3 strategic functions: clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction; holding school leadership to account; overseeing the financial performance of the school.

The Warning Notice will:

- set out the reasons for issue and supporting evidence
- indicate the action the governing body should take to address concerns
- make clear what action the LA will take if the Warning Notice is not complied with
- set the date when the 15 working day compliance period will come to an end
- remind the governing body that they may appeal to Ofsted if they feel that the grounds for issuing the notice are not valid.

In the case of sustained underperformance over time, the LA may recommend academy sponsorship.

Due to the success of West Berkshire’s preventative strategy, no schools are currently judged inadequate.

14.4 Local Authority Powers of Intervention

The Department for Education provides statutory guidance, on behalf of the Secretary of State, relating to maintained schools causing concern and this policy has regard to that guidance as well as being familiar with the relation to Part 4, and Schedule 6 of, the 2006 Act and also the Academies Act 2010 and The School Governance Regulations 2010. This legislation has been amended by several subsequent Acts, including recent changes made by the Education Act 2011.

Part 4 and Schedule 6, to the 2006 Act set out that a (maintained) school is eligible for intervention where one of the following is applicable:

- (i) when the school has not complied with a warning notice or failed to comply to the satisfaction of the LA and the LA has also given the school written notice of its intention to exercise its intervention powers under Part 4 of the 2006 Act
- (ii) when the school requires significant improvement following an inspection
- (iii) when the school requires special measures following an inspection
- (iv) Teachers pay and conditions warning notice has been given with which the school has failed to comply.

14.5 Intervention strategies

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives LAs additional powers of intervention. West Berkshire LA will deploy suitable strategies to secure improvement. It is expected that the intervention strategies used will normally be planned and agreed with the school through the Progress Team meeting. Where a school is in an Ofsted category the LA support and intervention will have been set out in the **LA Statement of Action**. The strategies used will be tailored to suit the individual circumstances of the school concerned.

The LA will use the range of intervention strategies available as appropriate:

1. Power to suspend the delegated authority for the governing body to manage the school budget
2. Power to appoint an Interim Executive Board (IEB)
3. Power to appoint additional governors
4. Power to require the governing body to enter into arrangements e.g. another school, NLE, federation

The interventions will be applied with full compliance with the DfE Statutory Guidelines for Schools Causing Concern May 2015.

Academies

The LA will raise any concerns about the performance of Academies with the Regional Schools Commissioner. The LA looks at overall performance of all schools (including Academies) and schools have access to each other's data to encourage schools to compare data, hold each other to account and discuss school to school support.

SEND

The LA recognises it is responsible for those young people who have, or may have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and must exercise its functions to identify children and young people with SEND. These duties apply regardless of where a child is educated.

Safeguarding

The LA recognises that it has overarching duties under the Children Act 1989 in respect of the safeguarding of children in need, or those suffering or at risk of significant harm, regardless of where those individuals are educated or found. i.e. maintained schools, academies, independent schools. The LA will report any concerns about safeguarding in academies to the Education Funding Agency, or for an Independent School, The Independent Education and School Governance Division at the Department for Education. If there is a safeguarding concern in a maintained school, it can use its powers of intervention as outlined in this document.

Governance

The School Improvement and Governance Team ensures that there are high quality governance in West Berkshire Schools and has appropriate monitoring arrangements to spot early signs of failure in relation to finance, safety or performance standards. The LA carries out an external review of finance and health and safety for every maintained school.

Governing Bodies are encouraged to engage in a series of self reviews/ audits in each academic year and to publish their annual report on their website with copies submitted to the LA e.g. Annual Review of Effectiveness of Safeguarding Audit.



15. Key supporting activities and strategies

15.1 Early Years Service

West Berkshire Early Years Service brings together a range of early childhood services under one central team. There are three elements to the team:

1. The Early Years and Childcare Team who manage all the responsibilities associated with the Child Care Act (2006). This involves implementing the code of practice for the delivery of free early education for 2, 3 and 4 year olds. The areas of particular priority within this part of the service is to ensure there are sufficient places to meet the free entitlement, engagement of the vulnerable 2 year olds and their families and the allocation of the early years pupil premium. To support parents the service maintains a Family Information Service.
2. The Early Years Quality Team supports both the School Improvement Service Level Agreement and the subscription service to the independent, voluntary and private sector. These both provide information, guidance on the early years foundation stage curriculum and support to ensure that all provision is good or better. Within the team there is a dedicated person to support Looked After Children and those with SEND. There is also a small team who deliver ECaT (Every Child a Talker) across our schools and settings. A priority for this part of the team is to support all settings to be good or better. The other main priority is to ensure all children in West Berkshire get a good start on their educational journey and focus upon closing the gap for the most vulnerable. This part of the service has a responsibility to support any provision which is judged to be less than good by Ofsted. This includes ensuring that an action plan is put in place to address the identified issues and to support the setting back to good or better.
3. The West Berkshire Family of Children's Centres provide a range of both universal and targeted early childhood services in partnership with a range of health, voluntary and other professional and organizations.

They prioritise the most vulnerable supporting children and families from birth to 5; there is a close focus upon closing gaps to give all children the best start in life. They work closely with the other areas of the Early Years Service to strengthen early childhood life chances and to ensure that all children are resilient and school ready.

15.2 Looked After Children's Education Service (LACES)

The Looked After Children's Education Service (LACES) is staffed by 3.5 full time centrally employed teachers whilst the statutory role of Virtual School Head (VSH) is held by one of the Joint Principal Advisers for School Improvement. The team support social care workers to implement, monitor and review the Personal Education Planning process for all statutory school aged pupils. In addition support is provided for preschool children and young people over the age of 16 years.

"Personal Education Plans" (PEPs) completion rate at 95% at the end of quarter four (2014) is high, and those PEPs reviewed were of a consistently good or very good

standard. The virtual head teacher monitors the use of pupil premium plus funding to ensure that it is used to improve the educational achievement and attainment of looked after children.

The quality of PEPs is of a consistently good or very good standard.” (LA OfSTED March 2015)

Information, advice and guidance are provided to parents who are adopters and to those with Special Guardian Orders, Accommodation Orders or Residence Orders.

The priorities for the team are:

- to ensure that all schools/settings provide a high quality of education for LAC pupils
- to ensure that PEPs continue to be of a high quality with short turn round times, with SMART targets
- to promote early intervention in order to prevent LAC from experiencing negative outcomes that impact on their learning or well being.

15.3 Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS)

The service is funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant. The Schools’ Funding Forum receives an annual application from the Local Authority to fund the support that is provided to schools who have pupils speaking English as an Additional Language or who are from the Gypsy, Roma Traveller (GRT) community. The support and challenge to schools is provided through a team which includes bilingual Pupil Support Officers, a dedicated GRT Pupil Support Officer, an Adviser and a Team Manager.

The priorities for the team are:

- to ensure that all schools/settings provide a high quality of education for BME/GRT pupils
- to promote inclusion and outcomes for pupils from vulnerable groups/social disadvantage
- to promote early intervention in order to prevent children and young people from GRT communities from experiencing negative outcomes that impact on their learning or well being.

15.4 Raising of the Participation Age Strategy



From June 2015, young people are now required to participate in approved education or training until at least their 18th birthday. Participating for longer means young people are more likely to attain higher levels of qualifications and skills, allowing them to compete for the best university places and employment opportunities in the future.

The participation of all 16 and 17 year olds is

tracked to identify those young people not meeting the duty to participate and encourage and promote effective participation to them.

The key activities of the RPA strategy are linked to ensuring:

- post 16 data sets are analysed to ensure sufficient and suitable education and training places for all young people, identifying and resolving any gaps in local provision by having robust conversations with school leaders to influence the curriculum and post 16 offer
- the participation of all 16 and 17 year olds is tracked to identify those young people not meeting the duty to participate and encourage and promote effective participation to them
- schools are encouraged to identify those in Years 10 and 11 at risk of not meeting the duty to participate post 16 and put in place support interventions to enable them to do so
- NEET data is shared with school leaders to improve effectiveness of transition support and guidance
- schools are sent up to date labour market information to inform careers advice and guidance and relevance of their current offer.



The most recent Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) scorecard for England which ranks local authorities on their performance, placed West Berkshire in the top 10 of 150 local authorities.

15.5 Cognition and Learning Team

The Cognition and Learning Team is an advisory service available to mainstream schools and academies (Primary and Secondary) in West Berkshire. The service forms part of the Learning Support Service and provides advice, training, guidance and support for schools, working in partnership with staff. In particular, the team work with SENCOs to support the development of SEN provision within the school with a focus on staff development and promoting positive outcomes for pupils. The team provides a Core Free service to all schools, and a Core Service Plus. The Core Service Plus provides additional support and services to these schools, in addition to a discounted rate for any training purchased.

The team members are all qualified teachers and have experience of working as a SENCO and hold additional postgraduate qualifications in SEN.

Dependent on the level of service a school opts for, the services can include:

- regular visits to support the SENCO in identifying development in SEN provision and practice in their school
- training – for SENCOs, teachers and teaching assistants
- contribute to the CPD of staff with a focus on the development of skills knowledge and practice in relation to SEN

- observation – of staff to support the monitoring of SEN provision within the school
- observation – of pupils to identify strengths and difficulties
- literacy and Numeracy Assessments where the development and acquisition of literacy and/or numeracy are concerns
- observation of a pupil's motor skills where motor difficulties are a concern
- involvement in multi professional meetings.

15.6 Behaviour Support Team



West Berkshire's Behaviour Support team is funded through the Designated Schools Grant. The Schools Funding Forum has agreed that funding to support the service will be de-delegated and that a centrally managed service will be available for schools in the primary phases with secondary funding delegated to schools. This decision is reviewed on an annual basis. Behaviour support teachers work with schools to support children with challenging behaviours. The service offers information, advice and

guidance as well as training and some direct 1:1 work with children and families.

The priorities for the team are:

- to provide high quality evaluations of pupils behaviours that enable staff to manage them effectively
- to continue to provide an extensive training programme which will include NQTs, midday supervisory staff and teachers who find challenging behaviours difficult to manage.

15.7 West Berkshire Educational Psychology Service

West Berkshire Educational Psychology Service (EPS) works in partnership with schools, settings and other providers of education and care. The EPS specialise in applying psychological principles and evidence based practice to meet the educational, developmental, social and emotional needs of all children and young people.

The EPS provides a range of services to schools including:

- Statutory work e.g. assessments and reviews as part of the Education, Health & Care/SEND process
- Response to Critical Incidents
- Consultation with teachers, Sencos and Senior leaders
- Individual casework including work with parents, staff and other agencies
- Training, supervision, coaching.

15.8 The Education Welfare Service (EWS)

West Berkshire Education Welfare Service (EWS) works to ensure that all children and young people of school age have access to their statutory education and are able to achieve and sustain regular attendance at school, so leading to improved educational attainment. This is achieved by working in partnership with schools, children and their families and other agencies. The EWS works with mainstream schools, academies, special schools and pupil referral units where attendance is 90% or less and where the majority of the absences are unauthorised.

Where necessary, and as a last resort, the EWS carries out the statutory duty of legal action when all efforts to help improve attendance have failed in order to secure the child's regular attendance at school.

In addition the Education Welfare Service:

- has links with the Youth Offending Team (YOT) to ensure the young people who are working with the YOT are attending school regularly
- offers schools training on the use of Fixed Penalty Notices as a way to improve attendance
- works closely with the Authority's Exclusion Officer as there are known links between behaviour, exclusion and attendance
- tracks those children who are missing from education
- offers safeguarding training and advice through the EWS Safeguarding Worker
- undertakes to protect children from exploitation and harm (including educationally) in the areas of child employment and entertainment by issuing work permits together with performance and chaperone licences.

15.9 Safeguarding and PREVENT

The Principal Education Welfare Officer is the schools LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) and leads on safeguarding issues relating to schools. This work includes training for school designated persons, auditing school policies and offering advice. There are strong links with the Local Safeguarding Board and the Child Sex Exploitation operational and strategic groups. Schools complete an annual safeguarding audit and governors are also provided with advice and guidance on their role to support and challenge school leadership on practices and procedures by the School Improvement Governance Team.

Since April 2015, training has been provided to schools and governors on the PREVENT agenda. This work has been carried out in conjunction with the Thames Valley PREVENT Co-ordinator and has included training LA staff as trainers. The workshop on raising awareness of preventing radicalisation, designed by central government, has been delivered to all schools with secondary aged pupils. A number of governors and primary school staff have also been trained. Staff have been trained so that they can return to their own schools and deliver the training to all staff within them. All staff from the LA's Education Department have also been trained.

The priorities for safeguarding are:

- ensuring that all schools carry out the annual safeguarding audit
- ensuring that school governing bodies review and amend their safeguarding policies and procedures based on the latest guidance from the LA
- ensure that all schools and governing bodies are aware of the PREVENT agenda and are clear on their responsibilities.

15.10 Health and Wellbeing in Schools Programme

The Health and Wellbeing in Schools programme supports the implementation and delivery of the West Berkshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Within the strategy 3 of the 11 priorities are supported by the Health and Wellbeing in Schools programme.

1. We will promote emotional wellbeing in children and young people through prevention, early identification and provision of appropriate services.
2. We will improve the health and educational outcomes of looked after children through prevention and the provision of high quality health and social care support and services.
3. We will improve the educational achievement of children on free school meals to bring them into line with the overall achievement of all children.

Working in partnership with the Public Health and Wellbeing team, the coordinator acts as the lead professional focused on embedding a holistic approach to Health and Wellbeing within West Berkshire schools.

The programme is lead by the Health and Wellbeing in Schools coordinator. This role is funded by Public Health and Wellbeing, the coordinator is part of the Social Inclusion team within Education Services.

The core purpose of the coordinator role is to:

- co-ordinate and promote the programmes, activities and resources which support Health and Wellbeing in schools
- provide effective Health and Wellbeing communication to schools.
- signpost schools to resources that promote a holistic approach to Health and Wellbeing in schools
- identify and share good practice on all matters relating to Health and Wellbeing in Schools
- work in partnership with schools, education services and public health colleagues in the development of pilots and programmes meeting the Health and Wellbeing needs of children and young people in West Berkshire.

Useful LINKS

West Berkshire - SLA Online Portal

www.westberkseducation.co.uk

Teach West Berkshire Microsite

www.teachwestberkshire.co.uk

www.teachwestberkshire.com

West Berkshire Training Partnership (SCITT)

www.thelifecloud.net/schools/WestBerksTrainingPartnership/

The Downland Alliance

<http://downlandalliance.org.uk>

The Theale Primary Alliance

www.berkshirereachingalliance.co.uk/

Berkshire Early Years Alliance

www.foundationsforlearning.org.uk/

Cognition and Learning Team

rireland@westberks.gov.uk

swhiting@westberks.gov.uk

Local education, training and skills support for 16-24 year olds

<http://westberkshire.elevateme.org.uk>

Health and Wellbeing in Schools

ndavies@westberks.gov.uk

www.westberks.gov.uk/schoolshwb

www.emotionalwellbeingwestberkshire.co.uk



If you require this information in an alternative format or translation, please call 01635 42400 and ask for the School Improvement Team

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