

# KGA Kent Governors' Association



## Minutes of the KGA County Assembly Meeting 15 October 2018 @ 1900 hrs Held in John Wigan Room, Oakwood House, Oakwood Park Maidstone ME16 8AE

### Welcome and Chair's Update

Jack Keeler opened the meeting in the absence of Mrs Janice Brooke, who was currently unwell, and welcomed everyone. Matthew Roberts, the Vice Chair, was on his way to the meeting from London but his train had been held up.

Apologies had been received from Mr Phil Sayer (Maidstone District) and Mr John Dennis (Shepway) prior to the meeting.

### ➤ Matt Dunkley CBE, Corporate Director

#### Overview of 2018 Results

Matt Dunkley introduced himself to the meeting and went through his presentation which covered the following slides:

#### • Early Years Foundation Stage Provisional Attainment

Matt explained that all the results shown on the slide were provisional and were still subject to final sign off. The LA was still awaiting data from some of the academies and it would not be until January 2019 when the final analysis would be available. The children had made a good start and progress had been made during the previous academic year.

#### • Key Stage 1 Provisional Attainment

- The results shown were derived from teacher assessment.
- All indications showed that Kent was above the national level and in line with national for greater depth and mathematics
- Progress had been made in all areas except the reading standard.
- KS2 attainment was looking good and the rate of progress from 2017 was being maintained.

#### • Key Stage 2 provisional attainment

- Kent was still doing well against the national level for TWM standard
- Results were good for reading and at the expected level
- Maths was now 1% behind the national level when it had been 1% ahead of the national level.
- Greater depth in maths was just in line with the national level
- The gap had not been quite closed with GPS and that result needed further investigation.

- **Key Stage 4 Provisional Attainment**

- There was no national data available
- The story for Kent was that moderate progress had been made on the EBACC standard pass
- The picture was static at the current time

- **Post 16 Provisional Attainment**

A level and technical level APS had stayed in line with the national level in comparative terms of Kent's performance.

- **Achievement of Disadvantaged Pupils**

A pupil was disadvantaged if:

- They were eligible for FSM at any time in the six years up to and including the January school census

OR

- They had been in Local Authority care for one day or more

OR

- They had been adopted from Local Authority care.
- A pupil would be FSM Ever if they were eligible for FSM at any time in the six years up to and including the January school census of that academic year.

- **The Primary School Context in Kent – July 2018**

In 2018 4,793 Year 6 pupils in Kent schools were identified as disadvantaged.

The area breakdown was:

- East Kent: 1,584
- South Area: 1,186
- North: 985
- West: 1,038

East Kent had the highest proportion of disadvantaged pupils

- **Disadvantaged Attainment Gaps at the end of Year 6**

The combined attainment for disadvantaged pupils in Kent had an improving trend and compared favourably with Kent's statistical neighbours.

- **Disadvantaged Attainment Gaps at the end of Year 6**

Although attainment gaps were wider than those found nationally, the attainment of non-disadvantaged pupils in Kent was above similar pupils nationally and showed a rising trend. Attainment of disadvantaged pupils needed to rise more rapidly to narrow the attainment gaps.

- **Support for School to narrow attainment gaps**

Schools wishing to review their strategies to raise attainment for disadvantaged pupils can:

- Commission a Pupil Premium review from The Education People or accredited headteachers
- Purchase the Kent Pupil Premium Toolkit and the Kent based 'Learning from Success' research booklet
- Best practice visits to other schools, signposted by the improvement advisers using similar contextual data
- Use the Teaching and Learning Toolkit from the Education Endowment Foundation

- **Secondary context**

**For Disadvantaged Pupils in 2017 (2018 data not available)**

- The Attainment 8 gap between these pupils and their peers is 17.5 which is wider than the national gap figure of 12.8 and ranks Kent eleventh against its 11 statistical neighbours
- The Progress 8 gap between those pupils and their peers is 0.8 which is wider than the national gap figure of 0.50 and ranks Kent tenth against its 11 statistical neighbours
- The gap between the cohort achieving the Basics (grade 4 or higher in English and Maths) and their peers is 33.8%. This is 6.8 percentage points wider than the 2017 national gap of 27.0% and ranks Kent tenth against its statistical neighbours for the measure.

- **Key Stage 4 – 2017 Data**

Slide shown on screen.

- **Summary and priorities moving forward**

Education attainment continues to improve and in 2017 was above or in line with the national average for Key Stages 1-3. There was a slight decline in attainment and pupil progress at Key Stage 4. Outcomes also improved for children in care and pupils eligible for free school meals at all Key Stages although attainment gaps remain wider than national, partly due to the greater rise in attainment of their peers.

- Reduce the differences in outcomes for our disadvantaged pupils, particularly at KS4
- Continue to increase the number of good and outstanding schools
- In partnerships with schools and KAH, develop an effective system of school to school support
- Ensure prompt solutions are found for under-performing schools
- Continue to improve outcomes in mathematics
- Continue the development of the role of The Education People in supporting improvement in schools in Kent

- **Kent Test**

- To look at options and implications of improving the preparation of children for the Kent Test
- To review existing county wide arrangements that already prepare children for the test
- To identify if there are possibilities around enhancing or publicising free test materials
- Develop draft proposal that can be discussed with Members initially, prior to an action plan for discussion with schools and Trusts.

Governors raised the following questions/comments:

**Question/Comment:**

A governor commented that in a school where he was Chair, 20 – 30 children who had failed the Kent Test went to appeal in relation to the admission process. 20 children won their appeal and had gone on to other schools. Some of the children had not even got through the Head Teacher's process. Because of the appeal process the school now had a deficit budget. Was the LA biased towards grammar schools?

**Answer:**

Matt Dunkley explained that there was an appeal mechanism around the Kent Test which was run by Head Teachers. Matt confirmed that the Chair had raised legitimate challenges and the matters would need to be reviewed on a case by case basis. The Chair also informed the meeting that the school in question had written to Paul Carter but received no response. The School was considering taking the matter up with their MP. The Chair was asked to forward all information to Matt Dunkley to deal with. The alternative to the Kent Test was that the 33 grammar schools in Kent had their own admission process. By having all the grammar schools using the Kent Test there would be continuity on admissions. Selection would not change, and the focus was to make the process as fair as possible.

**Question/comment:**

Grammar schools had become very selective especially in the North Kent Area and some schools ran a secondary line of testing which distorted the process. The distortion was even down to Mid Kent.

**Answer:**

Matt Dunkley explained that there had to be a universal arrangement for the Kent Test and he advised members to have a fair system that acknowledged their belief. People that could afford private tuition had an advantage. The Kent Test was designed to come up with questions that were resistant to coaching and academic ability. The Test was not absolutely context free and did not iron out every advantaged child. Able children should have the best opportunity to pass the test and go to a grammar school. The focus that the LA should have would be to keep all schools together to use the Kent Test.

**Question/comment:**

Most of the coaching took place during the summer holidays and it was a well-known fact that children lost learning during the six-week holiday gap. Would it not be fairer for the disadvantaged children to take the test during the last week of Term 6?

**Answer:**

Matt Dunkley commented that he had not thought about that. That could be looked at and was an interesting suggestion for the disadvantaged children. Education was going through an interesting time as the LA did not have the resources to give schools and their main role was to provide materials and services that supported that. We are looking at a set of strategies to give the LA a higher priority. For children on Pupil Premium other than being as challenging as we can be, we can prompt and point to the right things, but it would be up to schools and governors to effect the change.

With regard to the attainment gap, Kent was currently doing better at the end of KS2 which meant that youngsters had a better chance of passing on a moderated test year on year. If you have a cohort of children that don't pass and are doing well at the end of KS2 and the curriculum at non-selective schools that they attend is not quite right, then that could be where the issue was.

**Question/Comment:**

The data that was available was based on the proportion of children who did and did not pass and were disadvantageded and non-disadvantaged. It would be interesting to see the comparison. The governor was a chair of a C of E school and no parents had applied for places at the local CE secondary school. The only answer seemed to be that parents from a largely deprived area came away with the opinion that they were not the sort of families that schools wanted. They were not even bothering to apply.

**Answer:**

Matt Dunkley said that the LA was trying to bear down on any selective school on what they were doing to promote applications from disadvantaged children. All but three of the Kent selective schools had their own admission process.

**Question/Comment:** Of the three schools concerned, did they have a requirement to allocate a specific number of places for disadvantaged children?

**Answer:**

Matt replied saying that they performed well when compared to the selective schools.

**Question/comment:**

Could you see an increase in selective schools creating their own tests?

**Answer:**

That was a danger and schools could refuse to take part in the Kent Test and create their own admissions test but the LA would continue to work with the schools for fair access.

**Question/comment:**

Jack Keeler asked what the liaison was between primary and secondary schools.

**Answer:**

Matt explained that all the records were sent to the secondary schools, but they may not take any notice of the information. Mr Hill commented that some of the children moving into secondary schools were already ahead of the curriculum in Year 7 and were getting bored. Matt commented that it was the experience of some primary colleagues that MATs had a strong influence on transition arrangements if a school was a feeder school into a Trust. The fact was the diversification of providers at secondary level had led to some fragmentation. Some secondary teachers visited primary schools to look at what the pupils were achieving in KS2.

Jack Keeler thanked Matt Dunkley for his presentation to governors.

**➤ Simon Pleace****Funding Formula for 2019 – 2020**

Simon Pleace introduced himself and went through his presentation for the benefit of governors.

**• National context**

- S of S announcement in mid-July 2017 confirming introduction of NFF and an additional £1.bn
- This is in addition to the £1.3 bn announced in the 2015 spending review
- National school budget increasing from just under £41bn in 2017-2018 to £43.5 bn in 2019-2020 an increase of 6.3%
- Approximately half of the £2.6bn is new money
- Soft NFF confirmed until 2020-21
  - o Meaning we still operate a local funding forum
  - o And still a key role for Schools' Funding Forum
- Government's intention is to implement Hard NFF in the future (exact date unspecified) but our understanding is that this is subject to a change in primary legislation.

**• How does a Soft NFF work?**

- The NFF factors and rates are applied to all schools
- Maximum gains are capped at +3%
- Check that all schools are receiving +0.5%
- Then check that schools are receiving at least the Minimum Funding Levels (trumps +3%)
  - o Primary £3,500 in 19-20
  - o Secondary £4,800 in 19-20
- Notional school figures are then aggregated up to LA level to provide a revised Schools Block

**• Big Picture on DSG**

Table shown on screen.

**• Do we compare to OLAs?**

Table shown on screen.

In summary, Kent were still a low funded local authority. If the LA received fairer funding, then better funding could be provided to Kent schools.

**• Local Flexibility in a Soft NFF**

- We can continue to move funding from Schools Block to meet pressures in High Needs Block
  - o Anything over 0.5% requires SofS approval

- We can choose a local Minimum Funding Guarantee rate of between 0% and -1.5%
- **Journey So Far**
  - We undertook a detailed consultation with schools last year
  - Principle – take steps towards the NFF but continue to recognise local circumstances
  - We've already agreed rates for 2018-2019 and 2019-20. All factors at NFF rates except:
    - Lump sum £120k (not £110k)
    - Ever6FSM and Low Prior Attainment
    - Minimum Funding Levels

- **Smaller Consultation with schools this year**

Two proposals to consider

- Split Site – Should we consider introducing this factor?
- Movement between blocks – is there support to transfer funding from schools block to high needs block?

*Most important point - both proposals can be introduced with no change to the rates we have already published.*

- **High Needs Transfer**

- We transferred 0.5% (£4.4M) of SB into HNB in 2018 – 19
- DfE have recently confirmed this as one-off
- We are proposing to retransfer the same 0.5% in 2018 – 19 as well as a new 0.5% for 2019 – 20 (8.8m)

- **Why is the transfer required?**

- High Needs block only receives a minimal annual increase from the DfE
- Requests for EHCPs +81% in last 18 months
- Significant demand pressure in the last 3 years on our specialist provision (special schools and independent provision)
  - Special Schools +14%
  - Independent Non-maintained +50%
  - Independent SS maintained by OLAs +53%

- **Timetable**

- 15 October – launch consultation
- 16 November – consultation closes
- 30 November – SFF meeting and Disapplication of SofS
- Mid December – Cabinet Member decision
- January/February – School budgets calculated

Simon Pleace emphasised that the High Needs issue was not just a Kent problem but a national issue. The LA was looking at an SEN Action Plan on what could be done to manage the High Needs demand in a different way so that all available resources were used.

**Question/Comment:** When would the Action Plan be available?

**Answer:** It was with the SFF at the present time. Simon confirmed that he would forward the plan to Suzanne Mayes for circulation to all governors.

- ASD was the most prevalent need.
- Capacity would need to be built with the Educational Psychologist service.
- Purchase locum support
- Lobbying with the Government
- The mainstream High Needs process has been in place since 2015.
- There was more consistency around decision making

- Payments to schools
- Top up rates
- There were still 2,400 applications currently for high needs funding.

We know from the statistics that there around 50% of children who were on EHCPs did not access any high needs funding. There were also children accessing high needs funding without EHCPs.

**Question/Comment:**

A governor commented that in small primary schools, the funding was so tight that it was difficult to access high needs funding for a pupil who was entitled to it as there was no £6K available to access the funding.

**Answer:** There had been 8 years of flat cash which was causing the issue for primary schools. There was still a rather generous SEN top-up fund in Kent and the amount that a school had to contribute was capped at 20%. Kent wanted a system that supported inclusion in the best way, but the affordability had to be right.

**Question/Comment:**

There was pressure on schools having to re-submit high needs funding applications on an annual basis?

**Answer:** Some children did require annual reviews as their situation could have changed over the period of time.

Schools would need to respond to the consultation which ended on 16 November 2018. Otherwise the decision on the split site will go ahead. Simon Pleace explained what would define a split site. Distance between the two sites of a school was one option, another was the way the staffing structure which was in place. There was every permutation in Kent. It was important that something in addition to funding was put in place but had to be reasonable and fair. No financial value had been agreed at the current time.

**Question/Comment:** In relation to teacher pay increases, when and how would schools be receiving the money especially as there was no information as to where the money would be coming from?

**Answer:** The DfE had published the rates that would apply to maintained schools, special schools and PRUs. The advice to schools was that it was a decision for GBs and Headteachers to make.

There had been no annual inflation increases to school budgets. Schools were advised to set 1% of their budget as that was the information that was available and was linked to the public sector pay gap. Suzanne Mayes commented that there had been mixed messages from the AEOs at the District meetings and that an appendix with all the DfE information would form part of the Monthly Bulletin in October.

Jack Keeler thanked Simon Pleace for his presentation to governors.

➤ **Michael Roy – Inspiring Governance**

Michael Roy introduced himself to governors and gave a verbal overview of Inspiring Governance

- Inspiring Governance was a DfE funded online platform and had been in existence 2 years.
- Schools needed to advertise their opportunities on the platform so that people could apply for the positions
- Contacting universities and colleges for involvement
- The programme had been used well in pockets across the country
- Governors were encouraged to log on to the platform and use it for succession planning and to achieve a more unified result.

- Businesses would be targeted

**A governor asked if Michael Roy supported the notion that governors should be paid?**  
Michael Roy would not comment.

Mrs Bruce thanked Mr Roy for the quality of the resources on the website and governors were encouraged to research the platform.

All governors were encouraged to update their access to CPD on line via The Education People. If governors encountered any issues the Help Desk was available to resolve any issues.

Jack Keeler informed governors that he was currently representing the KGA on the interim Education Services Commissioning and Stakeholder Board in relation to The Education. As a result of a suggestion from a board member, if anyone was interested in becoming a non-executive director, then to contact him if they had a commercial background. The post was to be advertised. A governor asked when the advert for the Non-Executive Director would be advertised. Jack Keeler was under the impression that the advert would be released imminently.

The Education People Show was scheduled for 7 November 2018 at the Detling Show Ground in Maidstone.

Suzanne Mayes reminded everyone that the Governor Conference would take place on 13 November 2018 and Governors were encouraged to book on to the event through CPD online.

The Education People Show was scheduled for 7 November 2018 at the Detling Show Ground in Maidstone. At that same time a group of Governors from Austria, will be visiting The County.

**The date for the next KGA County Assembly meeting was scheduled for Monday 11 March 2019 at the Spitfire Ground, Kent County Cricket Club in Canterbury.**

The Meeting closed at 8.55 pm