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| 17 December 2009 | | ITEM 7 |
| Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee | | |
| UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS OF VULNERABLE GROUPS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE | | |
| Portfolio Holder: Cllr Sue MacPherson, Portfolio Holder for Children's Services | | |
| Wards and communities affected: All | Key Decision: No | |
| Accountable Head of Service: Christine Tinkler Head of Schools' Provision | | |
| Accountable Director: Jo Olsson Interim Corporate Director Children Education and Families | | |
| This report is Public | | |
| Purpose of Report: To inform the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the progress of vulnerable groups | | |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This reports sets out the progress made by identified vulnerable groups at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

1.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the implications of the attainment of vulnerable groups in the 2009 SATs and GCSEs.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

2.1 The Local Authority and schools are required to set targets for overall performance at the end of the key stage and also of particular groups of pupils. There is a key focus on ensuring that every child is able to achieve highly and that any barriers to attainment are removed as far as possible.

2.2 In particular attention is given to the progress of the following groups:

- The gap between the performance of children at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage living in the 20% super output areas and the rest
- The gap between those entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) and the rest for Level 4 in English and maths at the end of KS2
- The gap between those with identified SEN and those without for Level 4 English and maths at the end of KS2
- The performance of ethnic groups for level 4 English and maths at the end of KS2
- The percentage of Looked After Children achieving Level 4 in English and maths at the end of Key Stage 2
- The gap between those entitled to FSM and the rest for 5A*-C GCSEs including English and maths
- The gap between those with identified SEN and those without for 5A*-C GCSEs including English and maths
- The performance of ethnic groups for 5A*-C GCSEs including English and maths
- The percentage of Looked After Children achieving 5A*-C English and maths and those gaining any qualification

2.3 Currently national benchmarking data is not available for all indicators; therefore the data provided in this report gives the Thurrock data for 2008 and for 2009 and the national data for 2008.

2.4 Early Years Foundation Stage

2.4.1 Set out below is the data for the gap between the 20% post deprived areas in Thurrock and the rest of Thurrock compared to national statistics.

| | July 2008 | July 2009 |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Thurrock | 33.7 | 36.5 |
| England | 35.6 | 33.9 |

2.4.2 This means that that the gap between the attainment in the most deprived areas of Thurrock and the rest of Thurrock has widened since 2008 and has placed Thurrock significantly below most other LAs (128th out of 151).

2.5 Key Stage 2

2.5.1 Set out below is the performance of vulnerable pupils at the end of Key Stage 2

- The gap between those entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) and the rest for Level 4 in English and maths at the end of KS2
- The gap between those with identified SEN and those without for Level 4 English and maths at the end of KS2

| | | July 2008 | July 2009 |
|----------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| FSM / Non FSM | Thurrock | 29.7 | 24.9 |
| | England | 22.4 | |
| SEN / Non SEN | Thurrock | 52.1 | 54.9 |
| | England | 51.0 | |

2.5.2 The increasing gap between the pupils entitled to FSM and the rest has come about because the performance of FSM pupils has declined and the performance of non FSM pupils has improved.

2.5.3 The performance of pupils with identified SEN and those without has declined at a similar level. Both remain below national levels.

- The performance of ethnic groups for level 4 English and maths at the end of KS2

| | Percentage gaining level 4 in English and maths |
|---------------------------|---|
| All Thurrock | 65.8 |
| White background | 65.6 |
| Mixed background | 66.7 |
| Asian background | 71.4 |
| Black background | 67.9 |
| Other ethnic group | 61.5 |

2.5.4 There are still comparatively small numbers of pupils in a single cohort of each of the ethnic groups listed above. However, it is clear that in the main, pupils from ethnic minority groups out perform those from a white background. It is clear from anecdotal evidence, that families moving into Thurrock have high aspirations for their children and expect them to do well.

- The percentage of Looked After Children achieving Level 4 in English and maths

| | Number in cohort | Number taking test | Target % | % achieving level 4 |
|----------------|------------------|--------------------|----------|---------------------|
| English | 8 | 6 | 33.3 | 75 |
| maths | 8 | 4 | 33.3 | 50 |

2.5.5 The number of children ‘Looked after’ in a year group is comparatively small. However, it is very important that the children for whom we have ‘corporate parental responsibility’ are enabled to achieve as much as possible.

2.5.6 Pupils are only entered for the tests at the end of Key Stage 2 when they have reached a certain level. If this is not reached, teacher assessment determines the child's level. This is to ensure that children are not placed under undue pressure to take tests in which they cannot succeed. This accounts for the difference in the number of pupils entered for English and maths in the table above.

2.6 Key Stage 4

- The gap between those entitled to FSM and the rest for 5A*-C GCSEs including English and maths
- The gap between those with identified SEN and those without for 5A*-C GCSEs including English and maths

| | | July 2008 | July 2009 |
|----------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| FSM / Non FSM | Thurrock | 27.6 | 31.6 |
| | England | 27.8 | |
| SEN / Non SEN | Thurrock | 44.4 | 49.4 |
| | England | 45.3 | |

2.6.1 The gap between both FSM / non FSM and SEN / non SEN widened in 2009 compared to 2008. This indicated that whilst the performance overall of 5A*-C GCSEs including English and maths has improved; these particular groups of students have not been enabled to keep pace with the improvement of their peers.

- The performance of ethnic groups for 5A*-C GCSEs including English and maths

| | Percentage gaining 5A*-C including English and maths |
|-------------------------|--|
| All Thurrock | 47.8 |
| White British | 44.8 |
| Black African | 56.5 |
| Asian background | 55.0 |
| Mixed background | 45.0 |
| Indian | 77.8 |

2.6.2 The ethnic groups listed above are different from those listed for Key Stage 2. This is due to the changing demography within Thurrock. However, it is still the case than ethnic minority pupils achieve better than white British pupils.

- The percentage of Looked After Children achieving 5A*-C English and maths and those gaining any qualification

| Number of students in cohort | 5A*-G | Any qualification | 5A*-C including English and maths | Target % |
|------------------------------|-------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|
| 17 | 88.2 | 94.1 | 29.4 | 7 |

2.6.3 As with the Key Stage 2, the number of students in this cohort is small. However, they are our most vulnerable young people and it is vital that they have the best possible chance of becoming successful economically viable adults. The percentage gaining 5A*-C including English and maths – a key indicator to move into further and higher education – remains too low. Although significantly higher than the target set. The target for 2010 is 35% from a cohort of 23 students.

3. ISSUES AND/OR OPTIONS:

- 3.1 It is clear that both within the improvements seen overall at Key Stage 4 and the dips seen at Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2, the performance of particular vulnerable groups has not been as high as in 2008.
- 3.2 The New Ofsted framework for school inspections places great significance on the way in which schools ensure the progress of ALL pupils. Therefore these results are of significance not only to the children and young people involved but also to the overall improvement across Thurrock.
- 3.3 Those from ethnic minorities on the whole do better at Key stage 2 and 4 than the white British population. The aspirations of such families need to be spread across the whole population. The introduction of higher education facilities in Thurrock (at the Learning Campus and the One Stop Shop in Grays) is an important step in this journey.
- 3.4 The gap in the Early Years foundation Stage is being addressed by a realignment of the teachers working across Children’s centres, settings and schools so that their work is principally focussed on the super output areas. The teachers are then also able to support improved transition into Reception and Key Stage 1. Family Support workers linked to the Children’s Centres have an active programme working with ‘hard to reach’ families to support early learning within the home as well as in settings.
- 3.5 The gaps between the performance of FSM / SEN pupils and non FSM / SEN is unacceptably high and is being addressed through targeted work with schools by School Improvement Partners (SIPs) and the Primary and Secondary Strategy teams. Pupil Progress meetings held in schools termly require the senior leadership in schools to present evidence of the progress of pupils in these groups which feeds into discussions between heads and their SIP. A number of schools have found that activities such as Breakfast Clubs which provide food and opportunities for fun learning are a helpful way of targeting these young people and motivating them to succeed.

4. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

4.1 Not applicable

5. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

5.1 Thurrock Council has a clear priority to raise the attainment across all students within its boundaries. Therefore the performance of particular vulnerable groups is of great significance.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Yannick Stupples-Whyley**
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There are no direct financial implications within the report.

6.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Kevin Colville**
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There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. The report is for noting and information purposes only.

6.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Samson DeAlyn**
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This update on the progress of vulnerable groups of children and young people provides a detailed analysis of how disadvantage affects children in Thurrock across the key stages. The report notes significant challenges around looked after children, pupils with special educational needs and those in receipt of free school meals.

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

None.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The Key Stage results in 2009 showed that the performance of particular vulnerable groups had slipped compared to their peers. This is being addressed as part of the overall revised school improvement strategy for Thurrock so that all young people are able to become success, economically viable adults within the exciting opportunities now open to Thurrock

BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT:

- None

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:

- None

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