

## TRAFFORD COUNCIL

**Report to:** Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** 11<sup>th</sup> January 2017  
**Report for:** Update – Note as applicable  
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### Report Title

**Closing the Gap: Reducing Educational Inequalities within the Borough of Trafford – update on progress.**

### Purpose of Report

**To report on progress against the recommendations of the Closing the Gap Task and Finish group.**

### **Introduction**

A report on Closing the Gap in educational outcomes for children and young people in the borough was brought to the Scrutiny Committee on 1 October 2015, and as a result it was agreed that a Task and Finish Group be formed to investigate educational inequalities within Trafford, and how these could be reduced.

The finding and recommendations of the Task and Finish group were reported to Scrutiny on 16<sup>th</sup> March and the Executive Member for Children Services responded to those recommendations in a report to the Executive on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

The purpose of this report is to update the Scrutiny Committee on progress and challenges in reducing the educational inequalities within the Borough and specifically to focus on recommendation 2, 4 and 7 as those recommendations which could be addressed in line with the Executive Members response.

### **Report**

***Recommendation 2 – That the Executive support the collaborative work of five schools (Stretford High, St Anthony's, Altrincham College, Wellacre & Wellington) in undertaking a project combining their resources and expertise to work towards closing the gap in all schools.***

For context the headline measures for 2016 indicate that there has been little improvement at EYFSP (Early Years Foundation Stage Profile), with the percentage attainment gap between all children and the bottom 20% of children at 30.1% compared to 29.3% in 2015, 30% in 2014, and 30.2% in 2013. The KS1 and KS2 data has been measured differently this year so can't be compared with previous year's data.

However, the 2016 data indicates that for RWM (Reading, Writing and Maths) combined there is a 20% gap between non disadvantaged and disadvantaged groups reaching 'expected standard'. At KS4 the 'gap' is 35.5% which represents a small improvement on 2015 data (40.4%).

The five schools secondary schools identified in the recommendation met 4 times between February and July 2016 with the Head of an outstanding Teaching school to review and implement actions based on good practice. This has led to a significant improvement in reducing the 'gap' in those schools. The schools have worked well together with peer support and challenge which was shared in open and honest discussions about the schools current position and plans moving forward.

Each school committed a sum of money to fund the project and this remains to continue the work. All the schools in the group were prioritised to attend the Pupil Premium reviewer training delivered by The Heath teaching school- commissioned by the GM partnership.

One meeting has taken place this term to decide how to move forwards. The group identified expertise they would like to use and a secondary school in Trafford spoke to the group about their significant success in closing the gap in recent years. Another school has been approached to support the group given their successes with specific groups of pupils as identified in Raiseonline.

Two of the schools have opted into a pilot along with 1 other High School to look at Mental Toughness –following a presentation to secondary Deputy Head teachers this work is supported by AQR who are currently working with all schools in Blackpool and have a further substantial project in Doncaster.

The Directorate are not complacent and recognise the actions leading to an improvement this year will need to be embedded as good practice if continued progress is to be achieved. However, there is evidence to suggest that where schools work together to both challenge and support their performance then this leads to sustained improvement and improved outcomes.

***Recommendation 4 – That the Executive agree that the Council take the lead in organising an event to provide an opportunity for all Trafford schools to come together and share ideas on the four sub topics investigated by the Task and Finish Group.***

The Executive response indicated that the Directorate would be looking to build on existing structures which promote school to school support to deliver the intended objective. The Trafford Primary Teaching School Alliance has set up an area on their website for primary schools to share good practice.

The Closing the Gap Secondary Network is open to all Secondary Schools and could provide the same service. Flixton Girls School were to lead this group. One Deputy Headteacher meeting last academic year was devoted to the Pupil Premium strategy and feeding back on the Pupil Premium reviewer training a number of schools in the authority had accessed.

The Council continues to engage and challenge schools around their effective use of the Pupil Premium through the Head teacher Standing Conferences and is looking to co-produce a vulnerable children's strategy with the schools which will include priorities, targets and outcomes.

***Recommendation 7 – That the Executive support the distribution of a letter from Trafford Council which schools can use in conjunction with their own communications outlining the benefits of providing information (particularly National Insurance numbers) to identify children eligible for Pupil Premium funding.***

The Executive Member reported that some parents would be reluctant to provide national Insurance details, unless the letter had credibility and it was agreed that the approach should a letter from the Interim Corporate Director for children, Families and Wellbeing, distributed by schools. The letter was sent out on 21st July 2016 (Appendix 2).



## Appendix 2



Pupil Premium Letter  
- Secondary.pdf