

Working Group on SEND, pupil exclusions and children not accessing education



Final Report

As presented to the
Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee
on 26 March 2019



Walsall Council

Foreword

The provision of support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) continues to generate discussion both locally and nationally. Therefore, this Working Group was established by the Members of the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee to conduct an examination of the provision of support for children with SEND, and also to give consideration to the important related issues of pupil exclusions and children not accessing education.

In carrying out this review, the Working Group met on four occasions and it has been informed by the engagement it has had with the relevant professionals, including staff from the Council's Children's Services Directorate, from schools and the Walsall Schools Forum. The Working Group is grateful for this because it has enabled Members to frame and to set out its findings systematically and to formulate appropriate conclusions.

The aim of this report is for the Working Group to provide an insight into these issues and the impact that they are having on the children and young people in Walsall. The review process has produced seven recommendations that are intended to improve current practices and processes so as to alleviate some of the problems being encountered. It is the hope of the Working Group that these recommendations will be supported by the Council and by the Cabinet and that they will be actioned accordingly.



Councillor Aftab Nawaz
Chair of the Education Overview and Scrutiny
Committee and of the Working Group

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Introduction

In April 2018, the Executive Director (Children’s Services) commissioned a review of the effectiveness of the Council’s practice in supporting children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and its preparedness for the forthcoming Ofsted inspection of SEND. On 4 September 2018, the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report on the review and an action plan proposing that a Working Group be established to support the plan’s implementation. As the Committee’s work programme had already proposed a Working Group to consider pupil exclusions and children not accessing education, given the likely overlap between these issues, it was agreed by the Committee that a Working Group be established combining the areas of interest and to conduct an in-depth examination.

Terms of reference and Membership

Draft terms of reference were discussed and agreed at the Working Group’s first meeting on 2 October 2018. The terms of reference, as provided herewith in Appendix 1, were subsequently agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 9 October 2018.

The Working Group is comprised of the following Members of the Committee:

	Councillor Aftab Nawaz (Chair of the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee)		Councillor Lorna Rattigan
	Councillor Mark Statham		Councillor Stephen Wade
	Councillor Vera Waters		Mrs Teresa Tunnell (Parent Governor Member of the Committee)

The Working Group is being supported by the following officers:

Ms Anne Birch	Interim Assistant Director (Access & Achievement)
Dr Paul Fantom	Democratic Services Officer

Methodology

Since its establishment, the Working Group has held four meetings.

The first meeting, which took place on 2 October 2018, discussed the Working Group's terms of reference and selection of topics and, on 23 October 2018, there was further discussion of the information required and the people to be invited to meet with the Working Group.

To achieve this, the following approach was adopted by the Working Group:

- Who do you want to see?
- When do you want to see them?
- What will you ask them?
- What other data will you want to see?

The background information required in advance of the meetings was specified and supplied to the Working Group by the Children's Services Directorate. A comprehensive list of questions was devised accordingly (see Appendix 2) and relevant data provided by the Children's Services Directorate (See Appendix 3).

Two meetings were held on 8 January and 26 February 2019. For each meeting, the people or groups of people that the Working Group wished to interview had been identified and invited to attend one of the meetings. The full detail of these meetings is summarised in the findings section of this report.

The timescales being adhered to by the Working Group have been that this report should be presented to the meeting of the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 26 March 2019. The Committee will then be invited to make recommendations as to whether the report should be presented to the Cabinet and/or the Council in due course for the consideration of its findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Witnesses

The Working Group met with and discussed issues or received evidence, with the following witnesses being interviewed:

Ms C. Beirne	Head of Service (Education Standards & Improvement)
Ms A. Birch	Interim Assistant Director (Access & Achievement)
Mrs C. Draper	Executive Head Teacher of the Short Heath Federation and member of the Walsall Schools Forum
Ms K. Mann	Service Manager (Admissions & Pupil Place Planning)
Ms T. Pyatt	School Improvement Team Manager
Dr E. Thornbery	Lead Educational Psychologist & Strategic Support Manager

Findings

The provision of support for children with SEND

An aim of the Working Group is to obtain an explanation of how the various service areas in the Children's Services Directorate contribute to the education and support provided to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The Working Group was informed that the statutory responsibilities for SEND are undertaken by the Access and Achievement component of the Children's Services Directorate, namely SEND assessment, educational psychology, virtual schools, the admissions and the appeals process, and behaviour support. This includes identifying need and what that need might be, and the specialist provision necessary to meet needs and to assess impact.

The Working Group requested information on the intervention process and whether there is a statutory obligation for schools to do assessments. It was noted that given the number of children being excluded without support, schools should see the early signs and put appropriate measures in place. The Working Group noted that it is the responsibility of schools to seek advice and support from the local authority. It is expected that when this is not done, it is because schools have sought external advice. As regards whether schools are doing this in practice, conversations about the types of support that the schools need are ongoing between the Council and the schools.

The officers were asked by Members whether, in identifying challenging behaviour, the Council works mostly with local primary schools, or whether this is more often tackled when a child has progressed to senior school. In response, it was noted that because primary schools are often better placed to support children's needs when compared with senior schools, if issues are progressed at a younger age then interventions and support can be put around the child to ensure that they do not get excluded for such reasons. Hence, it is paramount that the right support for a child be available at the right time.

It was found that, in view of the mix of maintained schools and academies, it is essential to work with all the schools in order to build trust and share good practice, and the Strategic Education Inclusion Board plays an essential role in this regard. In the past support has been available from the Council; however, most of the financial resources now rests with schools themselves, and this will often be commissioned or the school has to pay for it, especially where the scenario in question is more complex. It is important for the Council to have a different but robust relationship with all schools.

Members enquired whether the level of skills required to deal with children with SEND in mainstream schools is sufficient. It was noted that the needs of children are changing and that schools are struggling to keep up, especially with the needs relating to autism. This was also because some schools have a high number of children with SEND and they may not have the knowledge, skills and understanding to deal with this; therefore, they are potentially putting other children and staff at risk as a consequence. Because the needs are so great, the costs are prohibitive and for every child with additional needs, if they have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and they are placed in a mainstream school the schools are required to find the first £6k on top of the funding provided for every pupils. Schools are struggling to maintain this and have to look at different ways, especially if they do not have the means to provide the 1:1 support that

some children may require. A Member described the use being made of Rushall Library as a community hub, with the three schools in the area making use of the facility. Also using it are the Autism Group and there is also involvement by local NHS organisations.

The SEND team

In relation to the current under capacity of the SEND team, as referred to in the Children's Services Annual Conversation document, there were 2,041 requests for an EHCP during 2018. The Working Group was advised that whilst there is increased demand for statutory assessment for EHCPs, it does not always result in a plan being produced but, nevertheless, there is work that has to be done and a commensurate demand on resources and time of schools and the Council. For the initial assessments, this demand is increasing month-on-month. However, to address this there should be an identification of what is driving this demand. The reasons for the team being under capacity are due to sickness and staff turnover and, therefore, use is currently being made of interim and supply cover. In the longer term, it is proposed to remodel the SEND team so that it is better able to manage the process and deal with schools and parents. Currently the team structure contains a high number of case workers, and it is proposed to recruit senior case officers who have an education background and should, therefore, have a better understanding of schools.

In response to a question on the length of the assessment process, the Working Group noted that given the complexity of some of the cases, the rising number of applications, and the under capacity team, the statutory deadline of 20 weeks is being exceeded. It was pointed out that producing a good plan is as important as meeting the deadline. It is necessary to recruit the right people for the team, possessing the right capabilities and the understanding to get this right first time so that a high quality plan, which is reflective of the needs of the child, is produced and the right provision can be put in place. Members asked the officers about the electronic system due to be introduced and whether this will speed up the process. It is anticipated that the new system will make a considerable difference by streamlining the process and increasing accessibility.

Further to a question on whether more educational psychologists are being recruited, this was confirmed but also noted that there is a local and national shortage of qualified staff, so that there is a reliance on locums (at high cost) and trainees. It was acknowledged that the position was better than previously, when some schools had gone outside of the Council to source this expertise. However, some parents are seeking external independent advice because of this lack of capacity.

The EHCP Process

There was a question about schools' expectations in relation to EHCPs and whether parents can request that an EHCP assessment for their child/children. It was pointed out that the majority of children with an EHCP remained in mainstream rather than specialist schools. It was confirmed that parents and schools can request that an EHCP be initiated, and the Council is then required to undertake an initial assessment to decide whether to proceed to a full assessment.

It was confirmed that it was not currently the case that the statutory requirements for EHCPs are being met and that more resources are required and have been identified,

but that this is placing pressure on the overall budget. Because of the delays, parents have been dissatisfied and have taken legal action, which then has an impact on the Council's resources.

Members asked about the hierarchy for the completion of EHCPs and whether the delays are due to backlogs in Children's Service, schools, or health agencies. The Working Group was advised that some of the delay is attributable to incomplete forms being forwarded to the Council and that this is due to there being capacity issues elsewhere. If the school has made a request for the EHCP, they will submit the education information with it, including details of the conversations that have been had with the family. If it is agreed to undertake the assessment, all the services involved in the process are contacted – included health and social care.

Officers were asked whether the delays relate to particular service areas or partners and there was the response that some of the delays were caused by technology/communications. There was a reference made to the digital toolkits that condense paperwork into a single document, and that once these have been successfully piloted and rolled-out, this should accelerate the process.

The schools' perspective

It was noted by the Working Group that the school environment is subject to constant change, which has an impact on how well the needs of children with SEND are being met and the levels of support available to schools in Walsall.

Clarification was sought from officers about the assessment/monitoring of schools' performance and the Working Group was advised that there are a number of criteria for this, such as Ofsted outcomes, pupil attendance, the proportion of pupils requiring SEND support, the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions. A Schools Causing Concern Protocol was adopted in September 2018 which uses all available data and then a RAG matrix is used for scoring. This is reviewed half-termly and schools are given a categorisation (Red/Amber/Green) which is then used for targeting resources.

Members asked whether schools receiving a Green rating are excluding fewer pupils than those with a Red rating. In a related question, officers were asked about the level of 'off-rolling' in Walsall. It was noted that this does happen, but the available evidence is anecdotal, and it would be helpful to know more about situations where parents are told to take their children out of school so that they can be educated at home. There are different reasons for parents wishing to educate their children at home, but the Council is aware of some cases where the children have been withdrawn and the parents have then made contact with the home education team. Different scenarios include parents being given a letter by the school even in cases when the parents are not able or not willing to educate their children at home. Such cases are referred to the Fair Access Panel, which places the child back in a school. The current advice to parents to avoid this is that if they are unhappy with a school then they should apply for a place at another school before withdrawing their child from their current school. It was confirmed by the officers that in Walsall, there are eight children/young people with EHCPs who are being electively educated at home.

The sharing of good practice, and whether a cost is incurred by schools due to releasing staff and arranging cover was discussed and the Working Group was advised that, given limited budgets, more incentives to encourage the sharing of good practice would be beneficial. Officers referred to the work of the Strategic Education Inclusion Board, pointing out that Dedicated School Grant (DSG) funding has been allocated so that schools can benefit collectively in this way from sharing knowledge. However, this is dependent upon the good will of governors and teachers, to make reciprocal arrangements in order for this to be mutually beneficial.

In response to a question from Members about the Council's Transformation Programme and the impact that this is having, Mrs Draper stated that what is contained within the programme and in the Inclusion Strategy are the right things and they will have an impact in the right way on the children in schools, but added that it will take some time for this to be completed. In order to make this work in schools, excluding children so that they are sent to another school, should be avoided. However, this requires a complete culture shift in a number of schools, with a rigorous approach and full training for all staff in schools, before it can begin to work successfully.

In terms of measuring impact, especially how well children do and the progress that they make, the number of exclusions across the Borough and the number of children missing from education needs to be reduced. The Working Group noted that the impact of the programme will start to be felt in schools during the next year and would be registered in the outcomes for the following year. Mrs Draper made reference to the strategy used in the schools in the Short Heath Federation but acknowledged that other Heads will be facing different problems and emphasised the restorative approach's effectiveness in helping to deal with the difficulties presented by the needs of some children with SEND. However, this will be a considerable undertaking to adopt across all of Walsall's schools and this has also been raised at the Schools Forum.

Anecdotal evidence was received about parental feedback from schools, which was that the restorative approach did not necessarily sit well with all parents, especially in relation to the decision whether to exclude or not, since this can be perceived as tolerating bad behaviour. Inevitably, some parents are not as understanding as others, even those whose own children have SEND, when their child has been hurt by another child.

The Working Group was informed that there is currently a hiatus because, for a period of time, there was not the necessary level of support to schools. Therefore, it is taking schools time to adjust. Members noted the role of the School Improvement Service and that schools do not now have an allocated School Improvement Partner. It was pointed out that the Council has now adopted the associates approach (although Members stated that there has been criticism of this at the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee and that it was seen as being a backward step). It was also noted that in some schools such issues can become the responsibility of the school improvement manager rather being addressed by the school as a whole. Members felt that for all schools, not just special schools, if there are below average levels of educational attainment, then the Council should have some control over the use of school improvement advisers. However, Members also noted the difficulty in that schools do not have to accept such interventions.

From the schools' perspective, it was pointed out that there had been a period when there was a lot of change, with School Improvement Partner School Improvement Partners being accessible and then no longer available, and a lack of clarity about what was happening. The view being expressed by the schools is that associates are tending to follow an inspection-type model. The Inclusion Strategy had been introduced into schools in September 2018 and the feeling of head teachers is that schools should accept this and move forward. The school improvement model has been in existence in various guises for some time and it is acknowledged that it works in some settings but not in all of them. It is important that there is adequate sign-posting for schools so that they can access support when they require it, and for this there needs to be better communication from the Council.

Members asked how schools could be helped to deal more effectively with children with SEND and how the process of sending children with SEND to special schools, when this was not the most appropriate response, could be dealt with. The Working Group was advised that in the absence of support from the Council, a number of schools in the Borough had bought in expertise and support for SEND. The point was also made that schools used to employ SEN Adviser teachers as part of the Local Authority offer, but when this service ceased to be provided other institutions, such as Rushall, started to trade this service. This is considered by many schools to be a really valuable and good service that gives staff training in dealing with children who have higher or more complex needs making some other schools reluctant to take them on.

In response to a specific question on the experience in her schools, Mrs Draper stated that there are specialist settings with mainstream schools, which requires fewer adults, and as such is unusual. It is also cheaper to operate in this way because other schools might be deploying eight members of staff for eight SEND pupils, whereas in the specialist setting there may be three or four staff for eight SEND pupils, making this approach more cost effective.

The Working Group noted that there are some schools in Walsall that do have this level of provision, and there is a need for the Council to review this. In cases of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), there is uncertainty as to whether this provision is in the right place and this should be considered, together with high need provision, as the funding mechanism may not be fit for purpose at the moment.

Emphasis was placed on a graduated approach for mainstream provision, management of the mainstream and SEND, and/or nurture provision, with the latter requiring space for children so that a different learning environment can be created for them.

Special schools are more needs-led than mainstream schools and, therefore, have to match up resources to the number of places that are commissioned. The traditional model that has been in use had significantly more provision for Non-verbal Learning Disorders (NLD), but is now requires more ASD provision, so the Council's provision has to be able to flex to see what is available and how the money can be used.

In relation to the number of special schools that there are in the Borough, the Working Group was advised that there are currently seven special schools and two Pupil Referral Units (PRUs). It was noted that every special school's funding is dependent upon the type of children being educated there. The traditional model requires that the Council

consider an inclusive mainstream school system able to accommodate all children with the right support. For children who have been designated as having moderate learning difficulties, it would not be expected that they would need to go to a special school.

The Working Group asked whether special schools are still taking children with more complex needs. It was stated that part of the difficulty is that it is known that the provision in special schools, especially for additionally resourced provision (ARP) needs to be reviewed. There has been an under spend in high needs funding because there is some uncertainty about what is needed model. It was noted that there needs to be alignment within the school system and that schools should engage in this discussion.

Members asked about the barriers preventing schools from providing support to children with SEND, it being confirmed that each child at a special school has an EHCP. It was noted by the Working Group that the expectation is of a graduated response and a need to raise the profile and the support going into schools. The perception is that children need an EHCP in order to get support and the assumption is that this means that they should be educated in the specialist provision.

A Member asked whether special schools are needs driven for children or whether they have got places and can build on that. The response was that special schools could be filled twice over, which was due to evolution rather than planning. It was pointed out by officers that once a child is in a particular provision, to change that (i.e. to move from specialist to mainstream provision) can be a complex process involving many legal requirements. This leads to high levels of dissatisfaction from parents, because it takes time for the changes to be made.

The Working Group sought further information on the impact of nurture groups, and whether every school in the Borough has or could have them. Members were advised that every school should have a nurture approach/provision and that some may need Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP). It was noted that use of this approach is made to deal with children who have trauma and attachment difficulties, so that they go into a nurture setting for part of the day. Reference was made by to the Walsall Right for Children agenda, which reviewed the level of support available in schools, and especially that concerning exclusions.

In terms of the costs involved, and whether these are prohibitive, it is considered to be a cost-efficient approach because the staff members who would otherwise have been supporting the children experiencing nurture can be used elsewhere in schools. Moreover, in terms of ethos, it provides the setting for the right children being in the right place to ensure that their needs are addressed, and this fits well with the graduated approach. However, a physical space and flexibility regarding the use of the learning environment is required and it is noted that due to constraints on buildings, not all schools in Walsall have this capacity or the facilities to make it work.

Reference being made to the cluster groups in Walsall, it was stated that a report was to be made to the Inclusion Board regarding the three strands of nurture, attachment and the restorative approach and the links to locality working. The locality model and the positioning of resources will enable better data to be collected from schools in the localities and it can be ensured that resources are then deployed to best effect.

Exclusions

There was a question concerning the high level of exclusions for children requiring SEND support and Members asked what is being done about this because the level of exclusions in Walsall is high and has increase over the last three years. Members were advised that due process has to be followed before any child is excluded from school, but also acknowledged that the high number of exclusions are following a national trend, which is upward. That a number of children with special educational needs are being excluded is a matter of concern but the root cause has to be identified, together with what should be put in place (i.e. specialist provision or PRU) for these children. It is possible to look at individual cases to see that might have happened, which can often be very challenging. Once a child is excluded from school, after the sixth day they become the local authority's responsibility, but capacity to make sure that they can find new school place or attend the PRU is limited and under pressure.

Members stated that this also depends on whether the reason for deciding to exclude a child could be due to the child having a special need or disability, for example if a child with SEND were to physically assault other children. It was pointed out by officers that it is unlawful for children to be excluded from school for this reason; however, if a school cannot meet the needs of a particular child, then it becomes a very difficult situation for the school, the parents and the child.

The Working Group received some anecdotal evidence from a Member of children having to move school due to being bullied or not getting the support they need, when interventions could have been made to help those children. Members were advised that there is a reliance on the schools giving the Council this type of information, so that an accurate picture can be obtained, but it was added that it is often hard to get accurate data from the schools on some of these aspects.

'Off rolling' and children missing from education

Members asked whether schools receiving a Green RAG rating are excluding fewer pupils than those with a Red rating. In a related question, officers were asked about the level of 'off-rolling' in Walsall. It was noted that this does happen, but the available evidence is anecdotal, and it would be helpful to know more about situations where parents are told to take their children out of school so that they can be educated at home. There are different reasons for parents wishing to educate their children at home, but the Council is aware of some cases where the children have been withdrawn and the parents have then made contact with the home education team. Different scenarios include parents being given a letter by the school even in cases when the parents are not able or not willing to educate their children at home. Such cases are referred to the Fair Access Panel, which places the child back in a school. The current advice to parents to avoid this is that if they are unhappy with a school then they should apply for a place at another school before withdrawing their child from their current school. It was confirmed by the officers that in Walsall, there are eight children/young people with EHCPs who are being electively educated at home.

The Working Group asked about interventions for these children who are being educated at home and Members noted that there are two officers (one for primary schools and the other for secondary schools) in the home education team who carry out home visits,

when they look at the curriculum being followed and the progress made by the child. It was pointed out that some parents are unclear about the level of support that the Council can provide and assume that it can arrange for personal tutors to be supplied. It was added that when Ofsted carry out inspections they look at the cohorts of children, where their starting point is and that they are making good progress and achievement.

The Working Group asked whether academies find it easier to remove difficult to manage children from their rolls. They also asked what is being done to raise skill levels and expectations in schools rather than just excluding pupils. The Working Group was informed that there had been an increase in the number of children missing education. Children were either being excluded or their parents were being encouraged to find another school. Nationally, as well as for Walsall, the figures were too far high. A Member enquired whether it was the case that a larger proportion of the children being excluded/off-rolled in this way are those children with SEND. It was acknowledged that children with SEND are at a much greater risk of being excluded and that at least half – if not more – of all children being excluded have SEND. Members were advised that some of the schools do not know how to manage in order to cope with children with SEND, especially if they cannot access the support that should be going into schools.

The Ofsted inspection of SEND

In terms of the forthcoming Ofsted inspection of SEND, officers were asked about resources and whether it would be beneficial to allocate more resources from elsewhere in the Children's Services Directorate. It was explained that the Directorate Management Team had agreed to increase the capacity and introduce the new structure for the SEND team. However, allowing for the costing for this, there remains a shortfall of £120k which will have to be found from within the same service area.

The expectations regarding the outcome of the Ofsted inspection were discussed by Members. It will be a multi-disciplinary joint inspection involving local health services, and it was reported that two meetings with health services have already been held by officers. It was noted that this would be reported to the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee in due course.

The process of the inspection was outlined to the Working Group, with it being emphasised that a lot of progress is being made and there is confidence that this can be demonstrated. Ofsted need to be assured that a good self-evaluation has been completed, as this will focus on the Council's relationship with parents/carers. A number of vulnerabilities remain, however, which are being addressed. Examples are the local offer, and the Independent Advice and Support Services (formerly parent partnership services) as this has not been compliant due to a lack of capacity (one officer and one apprentice) and this matter is being resolved with the National Children's Bureau. Work is also being carried out with the local health services on the joint decision-making process. Following its conclusion, Ofsted will send a letter to the Council regarding the findings and outcomes of the inspection. Should there be significant concerns, Ofsted will provide a 'Letter of Action', following which there will be a re-inspection of the service within 12 months.

Pupil Premium funding

In response to a question on the impact of Pupil Premium and whether this is used for children with SEND, the Working Group noted that Pupil Premium is determined by the family, i.e. if the child is entitled to free school meals then Pupil Premium funding is attracted. As regards the impact of Pupil Premium on children with SEND, there can be a cross-over but not always. It is important to note that in cases where Pupil Premium is applicable, it can be used to fund social and emotional mental health support, such as team around the family and team around the child approaches, for example.

Members were advised that children attracting Pupil Premium funding, both nationally and in Walsall, tended not to do so well academically as their peers. Schools are held to account for Pupil Premium and the impact it has, and this information has to be published on the school's website and demonstrated as part of the Ofsted inspection process.

Members also asked if there were any 'hotspots' or disadvantaged areas in Walsall, where the number of children with SEND is particularly high. The Working Group noted that there are some areas of significant socio-economic deprivation and it was also pointed out that the locality model would assist with the allocation of resources in this regard. It was pointed out that SEND funding was fair and that the difficulties experienced are connected to the assessments for EHCPs.

Some suggestions from interviewees

When questioned by Members on whether there was one thing they would like to have implemented in Walsall that would improve SEND provision, the response of the interviewees was to increase awareness and understanding of the responsibilities, and the importance of inclusion for vulnerable children. This is because there is an impact on so many families, children and their life chances, and the wider economy. Also stressed was the importance of being committed to a longer term plan, to make sustainable change rather than 'fire-fighting', and the significance of the Strategic Education Inclusion Board and its strategic Working Groups. This will ensure that communities feel fully valued, whether via maintained schools or academies, so that all use the resources available to Walsall collectively and to best effect.

The practical suggestion was noted that when elected Members visit schools, they should ask the 'right' questions regarding school management and how the schools are coping. There was support for Councillors who are also school governors to receive training on SEND, particularly due to the changing environment, as this would provide the advice/assistance on these types of issues and questions to ask.

The Working Group asked whether there are any additional resources that are required. Officers agreed that with the plans in place at the moment and the exclusion strategy, the Council is part way there but that it takes time, and that a commitment to work collectively would be beneficial, especially with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) for children with autism. Reference was also made to the 12-18 month model and working with school leaders to develop the best model to help schools to develop their practice.

Conclusions

The Working Group was established to investigate the Council's support to children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and pupil exclusions and children not accessing education. In reviewing the action plan that was presented to the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4 September 2018, the Working Group has been guided by the plan's main recommendations:

1. In terms of strategy and vision, there is a need for a clear vision supported by an accountability structure to ensure appropriate management oversight.
2. Robust arrangements should be in place to ensure that the educational needs of vulnerable children and young people are supported and to ensure that children and young people out of school can access appropriate education in a timely manner.

Having regard to the Working Group's specific findings, the conclusions reached were:

3. That there is a recognition that schools in the Borough have been and continue to be under-resourced and furthermore that they have to deal with a both a high demand for school places and a significant and rising number of children who present at school with a range of special educational and complex needs and disabilities.
4. That on the basis of the evidence presented, the provision of support to children in the Borough with SEND has lacked a consistency of approach and, as a consequence of this, has to be attributed with some responsibility for the generation of a demand from an increasing number of parents making requests for their children to be assessed for an EHCP.
5. That by not meeting the statutory timescale of twenty weeks for the completion of the EHCP process, there are also serious implications for the educational development and wellbeing of vulnerable children in the Borough. However, there are a number of factors underpinning this situation, including partially completed forms from schools, and delays in the provision of information from other partner organisations. The Working Group was advised of the steps being taken to remodel the SEND team and to introduce a new software package in order to rectify this and ensure that the timescales are met.
6. That all the schools in the Borough should have the capability and capacity to manage those children with SEND who are enrolled to study there. The Working Group notes the practice of 'off-rolling' pupils, i.e. excluding them from a school so that they have to be educated at another school or encouraging the parents of these children to electively educate them at home, and that this may be having a profound impact on those children who may have special educational needs and disabilities, or who may be difficult to manage. This is evidenced by data collected on school exclusion rates and to the Council's processes in respect of children missing education. Accordingly, the Working Group wishes to see action taken by the Council to curtail this practice and was advised that the 'schools causing concern' process could be used to help achieve this.

7. That the Council's Transformation Programme has been positively received by schools, but that there is a recognition that it will also take time for this to begin to have the desired effect in schools.
8. That all schools should be encouraged to develop ways in which to share their good practice, both amongst themselves and with the Council, and that school governors (a number of whom will be elected Members) be actively encouraged to attend the training that is made available by the Council on the provision of SEND in Walsall.
9. That the value and importance of using the restorative approach and nurture groups in schools for those children with SEND is noted and encouraged, but it is also recognised that the effectiveness of this will be dependent upon the availability of resources, including space in buildings, and that there are other constraints that may affect the learning environment in schools. The Working Group supports the introduction of quality assurance for nurture groups so that there is a clear understanding of standards for delivery across the Borough.
10. That the introduction by the Council of the locality model will be beneficial to the gathering of information from schools and in fostering improvements in communication between schools and the Council.
11. That in view of the local and national shortage of fully qualified professionals for key roles that are crucial to the provision of SEND support, for example, educational psychologists, that suitable measures are developed to increase the attractiveness and opportunities to be gained from working in the Borough.
12. That in view of the recent Ofsted inspection of the SEND provision in Walsall, and upon receipt of the report of the inspection, when preparing the action plan in response to this document and its recommendations, due account be taken of the findings, conclusions and recommendations of this Working Group and that they be incorporated into the action plan as appropriate.

Recommendations

That the report of the Working Group be endorsed by the Cabinet and/or the Council and that the following recommendations to the Executive Director (Children's Services) be considered and implemented as appropriate:

1. That, in conjunction with the Council's partners in schools and health agencies, all necessary steps be taken to ensure compliance with the statutory timescale of twenty weeks required for the completion of the SEND process.
2. That the Council takes all practical steps, via the 'schools causing concern' and other processes, to seek to reduce the practice of 'off-rolling' that is being carried out by some schools in the Borough to the detriment of the children affected and their families and to other schools.
3. That a report on 'off-rolling' be added to the work programme of the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration during the next municipal year.
4. That the Council and schools be encouraged to share their good practice in the most practical and accessible manner and that school governors be actively encouraged to attend training organised by the Council in relation to the SEND provision.
5. That the Council takes steps to encourage and assist the introduction and quality assurance of nurture groups in schools so that a standard for their operation can be introduced and which can be delivered across the Borough.
6. That to address the shortage of fully qualified professionals for key roles that are crucial to the provision of SEND support, that suitable measures be taken by the Council to aim to increase the attractiveness and opportunities to be gained from working in the Borough in order to encourage applications from potential candidates.
7. That account be taken of the findings, conclusions and recommendations of this Working Group with a view to incorporating them in the action plan to be prepared following the conclusion of the Ofsted inspection of the SEND provision in Walsall.

Background papers

The Working Group received the following documents and used them both as a reference sources and for formulating their questions.

- *Creating an opportunity for all: Our vision for alternative provision* (Department for Education, March 2018).
- *Government response to the Education Select Committee's fifth report of Session 2017-19 on alternative provision* (Department for Education, October 2018).
- *Walsall Right for Children Inclusive Strategy* (Walsall Council, 2018)
- *Walsall Children's Services – Annual Conversation* (Walsall Council, November 2018)
- *Walsall Council Primary Fair Access Protocol* (Walsall Council, April 2018)
- *Walsall Council Secondary Fair Access Protocol* (Walsall Council, December 2017)

Walsall Council Overview & Scrutiny Working Group: Initiation Document

Work Group Name:	Working Group on SEND, pupil exclusions and children not accessing education
Committee:	Education Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Municipal Year:	2018/19
Lead Member:	Councillor Chris Towe
Lead Officer:	Ms Anne Birch, Interim Assistant Director
Support Officer:	Dr Paul Fantom, Democratic Services Officer
Membership:	Councillor Aftab Nawaz (Chair) Councillor Amers Kudhail Councillor Lorna Rattigan Councillor Mark Statham Councillor Stephen Wade Councillor Vera Waters Mrs Teresa Tunnell
Co-opted Members:	N/A

1. Context	<p>In April 2018, the Executive Director (Children's Services) commissioned a review of the effectiveness of the Council's practice in supporting children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and its preparedness for the forthcoming Ofsted inspection of SEND.</p> <p>On 4 September 2018, the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report on the review and an action plan based on the review's recommendations. The report proposed that the Committee establish a Working Group to support the action plan's implementation. As the Committee's work programme already contained a Working Group to consider pupil exclusions and children not accessing education, and in view of the likely overlap between these issues, it was agreed by the Committee that a Working Group be established combining the areas of interest and to conduct an in-depth examination. The Working Group's recommendations will be presented to the Committee in due course.</p>
2. Objectives	<p>The Working Group has identified two of the recommendations action plan that they wish to review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Strategy and Vision:</u> There is a need for a clear vision supported by an accountability structure to ensure appropriate management oversight. • <u>Meeting the needs of vulnerable children and young people:</u> A robust pathway should be developed with schools and partners to ensure children and young people out of school can access appropriate education in a timely manner <p>The Working Group propose to submit a report and recommendations to the meeting of the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 20 November 2018.</p>

3. Scope	<p>The Working Group has adopted the following approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who do you want to see? • When do you want to see them? • What will you ask them? • What other data will you want to see? <p>To review the recommendations, a minimum of two meetings are to be arranged. For each meeting, the people or groups of people that the Working Group wish to meet with will be identified. In order to maximise responsiveness, the Working Group may be split into two sub-groups and/or operate in a more informal way via focus groups. A list of questions will be devised by the Working Group and other data/information required in advance of the meetings will be specified so that it can be supplied by the Children's Services Directorate/other agencies.</p>																				
4. Equalities Implications	<p>The Working Group will ensure that its recommendations will take into account the different strands of equality and ensure that no group is disadvantaged.</p>																				
5. Who else will you want to take part?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anne Birch, Interim Assistant Director (Access & Achievement) • Claire Goss, Head of Service (SEND & Inclusion) • Representative(s) from Walsall Council School Admissions • Representative(s) of FACE Walsall • Others (to be determined by the Working Group) 																				
6. Timescales & Reporting Schedule	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date</th> <th>Action</th> <th>Who</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2 October 2018</td> <td>Terms of reference</td> <td>Working Group</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9 October 2018</td> <td>Agree terms of reference</td> <td>Education O&S Cttee</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TBC</td> <td>Consider/review recommendation 1</td> <td>Working Group</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TBC</td> <td>Consider/review recommendation 2</td> <td>Working Group</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20 November 2018</td> <td>Present final report</td> <td>Education O&S Cttee</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Date	Action	Who	2 October 2018	Terms of reference	Working Group	9 October 2018	Agree terms of reference	Education O&S Cttee	TBC	Consider/review recommendation 1	Working Group	TBC	Consider/review recommendation 2	Working Group	20 November 2018	Present final report	Education O&S Cttee
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Questions to interviewees from the Working Group

Walsall Right for Children Inclusion Strategy

1. The transformation programme gives a commitment to ensuring support so that children can make the best start and be safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well. What support are children with SEND, children who have been excluded and children missing education who might not be achieving in line with their abilities being given? How are the aspirations/expectations of these pupils being raised?
2. The transformation programme gives a commitment to ensuring high challenge and support based on a restorative approach at all levels. How is this implemented for children with SEND, children who have been excluded and children missing education?
3. What progress has been made since the introduction of the 'Raising Attainment of Disadvantaged Youngsters' (RADY) concept?
4. What effect have the changes in local and national education policy and funding, such as increased autonomy for schools, i.e. academies, and local authorities as strategic commissioners, had on the education and support for children with SEND, children who have been excluded and children missing education.
5. Have changes to school improvement processes and systems led to an overall improvement in the effectiveness of education and support for children with SEND, children who have been excluded and children missing education.
6. How is good practice shared with the various agencies and partners responsible for the education and support for children with SEND, children who have been excluded and children missing education?
7. What has been the impact of Pupil Premium on the education of children with SEND, children who have been excluded and children missing education? Has this been positive?
8. What approaches are being used to ensure that the most challenging pupils are not being excluded from schools? How effective is the use of nurture techniques/units?
9. Are you aware of any 'hotspots', i.e. areas or wards that would benefit from additional resources or support? Have these changed over time?
10. What additional support do you think would be beneficial to children with SEND, children who have been excluded and children missing education?

Children's Services Annual Conversation 19 November 2018

Questions relating to SEND:

1. As there is reference to the SEND Assessment Team being under capacity, what is being done to address this?
2. As there is reference to an increase in the number of requests for statutory assessment, how is this being dealt with (especially in view of question 1)?
3. As there is reference to other professionals/some schools not providing information, such as the annual revision reports, within the statutory timescales, what steps are being or have been taken to overcome this?
4. Given that a new electronic system for EHCP assessment, development and monitoring was introduced in December 2018, are there early indications that the introduction of this will be beneficial?

Question relating to Fair Access Protocols:

1. There has been some criticism of the protocols because there are/were too many pupils without a school place for too long and this was exerting considerable demands on the PRUs. What has or is being done to address this?

Question relating to the Behaviour Support Service

1. There has been some criticism of the Behaviour Support Service from parents and schools regarding the offers being provided by the BSS. What has or is being done to address this in order to reduce the number of exclusions?

Department for Education Documents – March and October 2018

Questions regarding Alternative Provision

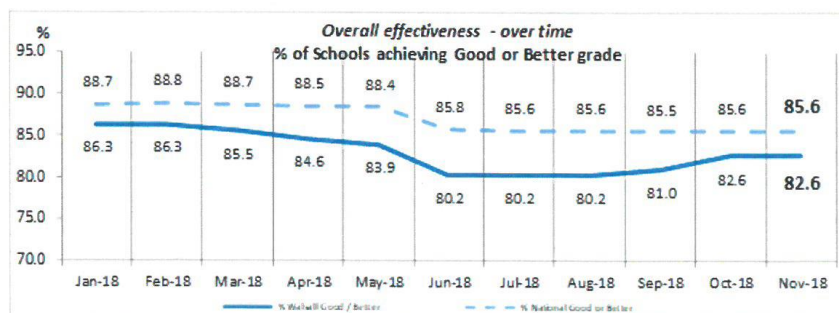
1. Given that children and young people with SEND (EHCP to 25 years of age) and looked after children are more likely to be excluded, what is Walsall's experience and what has been and is being done to address this?
2. Has there been any evidence of Walsall schools 'off-rolling' children from the register (i.e. applying pressure on parents to remove their children from the school)? If so, what happened and was the outcome, what was done to ensure this was not repeated?

Walsall LA Executive Summary 2017-2018

1) Ofsted Judgements as of 16.11.18

Overall effectiveness									
Nov-18	Good / Better	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Total Inspections	No Data	Total Schools	
Nursery LA	100% (8)	100% (8)	-	-	-	8	0	8	
Primary	LA Maintained	85.3% (58)	17.6% (12)	67.6% (46)	11.8% (8)	2.9% (2)	68	0	68
	Academy Converters	75% (6)	12.5% (1)	62.5% (5)	12.5% (1)	12.5% (1)	8	0	8
	Academy Sponsor Led	66.7% (6)	-	66.7% (6)	11.1% (1)	22.2% (2)	9	0	9
	Academies Overall	70.6% (12)	5.9% (1)	64.7% (11)	11.8% (2)	17.6% (3)	17	0	17
	Primary Overall	82.4% (70)	15.3% (13)	67.1% (57)	11.8% (10)	5.9% (5)	85	0	85
Secondary	LA Maintained	100% (3)	-	100% (3)	-	-	3	0	3
	Academy Converters	62.5% (5)	50% (4)	12.5% (1)	37.5% (3)	-	8	0	8
	Academy Sponsor Led	75% (6)	-	75% (6)	12.5% (1)	12.5% (1)	8	0	8
	Academies Overall	68.8% (11)	25% (4)	43.8% (7)	25% (4)	6.3% (1)	16	0	16
	Secondary Overall	73.7% (14)	21.1% (4)	52.6% (10)	21.1% (4)	5.3% (1)	19	0	19
Special	LA Maintained	100% (6)	33.3% (2)	66.7% (4)	-	-	6	0	6
	Academy Converters	100% (1)	-	100% (1)	-	-	1	0	1
	Special Overall	100% (7)	28.6% (2)	71.4% (5)	-	-	7	0	7
Pru LA	50% (1)	-	50% (1)	-	50% (1)	2	0	2	
Overall	LA Maintained	87.4% (76)	25.3% (22)	62.1% (54)	9.2% (8)	3.4% (3)	87	0	87
	Academy Converters	70.6% (12)	29.4% (5)	41.2% (7)	23.5% (4)	5.9% (1)	17	0	17
	Academy Sponsor Led	70.6% (12)	-	70.6% (12)	11.8% (2)	17.6% (3)	17	0	17
All Schools	82.6% (100)	22.3% (27)	60.3% (73)	11.6% (14)	5.8% (7)	121	0	121	

% Good or Better	Jan-18	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18	May-18	Jun-18	Jul-18	Aug-18	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18
National	88.7	88.8	88.7	88.5	88.4	85.8	85.6	85.6	85.5	85.6	85.6
Walsall	86.3	86.3	85.5	84.6	83.9	80.2	80.2	80.2	81.0	82.6	82.6
Gap	-2.4	-2.5	-3.2	-3.9	-4.5	-5.6	-5.4	-5.4	-4.5	-3.0	-3.0



Produced by Information Services updated 20.11.18

2) Performance Data.

Early Years Foundation Stage

EYFS % Good Level of Development				
Group	2017		2018	
	Walsall	National	Walsall	National
All Pupils	66	71	68	72
Disadvantaged	58	nk	57	57
FSM	56	56	57	57
SEN With statements or EHC plan	2	4	2	5
SEN Support	15	27	24	28
CLA	57	nk	68	nk
LA Maintained Schools	66	nk	68	nk
Academy Schools	65	nk	68	nk

The percentage of pupils achieving a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD) within Walsall has improved by 2% from 66% in 2017 to 68% in 2018. National outcomes for this measure have improved by 1% this year from 71% in 2017 to 72% in 2018. The gap to national has decreased slightly by one percentage point from 5% to 4%

Year One Phonics

Y1 Phonics % Working at the expected standard				
Group	2017		2018	
	Walsall	National	Walsall	National
All Pupils	80	81	83	82
Disadvantaged	72	70	78	72
FSM	71	68	75	70
SEN With statements or EHC plan	24	18	20	20
SEN Support	39	47	44	48
CLA	72	nk	75	nk
LA Maintained Schools	79	81	84	83
Academy Schools	70	82	81	83

The percentage of pupils passing the year 1 phonics screening test in Walsall has increased by 3% from 80% to 83% in 2018. This is 1% higher than the current National performance.

KS1 Reading

KS1 Reading - % Expected standard or above				
Group	2017		2018	
	Walsall	National	Walsall	National
All Pupils	71	76	73	75
Disadvantaged	63	63	63	63
FSM	63	61	59	60
SEN With statements or EHC plan	12	14	13	13
SEN Support	23	34	24	33
CLA	50	51	44	nk
LA Maintained Schools	74	76	75	76
Academy Schools	63	76	67	75

KS1 Reading - % Greater Depth				
Group	2017		2018	
	Walsall	National	Walsall	National
All Pupils	17	25	19	26
Disadvantaged	10	14	12	14
FSM	10	13	11	13
SEN With statements or EHC plan	1	2	0	2
SEN Support	2	5	3	5
CLA	12	9	nk	nk
LA Maintained Schools	18	26	20	26
Academy Schools	15	25	17	25

KS1 Writing

KS1 Writing - % Expected standard or above				
Group	2017		2018	
	Walsall	National	Walsall	National
All Pupils	63	68	65	70
Disadvantaged	53	54	53	55
FSM	52	52	50	53
SEN With statements or EHC plan	6	9	10	9
SEN Support	16	23	15	25
CLA	35	39	33	nk
LA Maintained Schools	65	69	67	71
Academy Schools	56	69	58	70

KS1 Writing - % Greater Depth				
Group	2017		2018	
	Walsall	National	Walsall	National
All Pupils	8	16	9	16
Disadvantaged	5	8	5	8
FSM	4	7	4	7
SEN With statements or EHC plan	0	1	0	1
SEN Support	0	2	1	2
CLA	4	4	nk	nk
LA Maintained Schools	8	16	10	16
Academy Schools	7	16	9	16

KS1 Maths

KS1 Maths - % Expected standard or above				
Group	2017		2018	
	Walsall	National	Walsall	National
All Pupils	73	75	74	76
Disadvantaged	63	62	63	63
FSM	61	60	62	61
SEN With statements or EHC plan	13	14	14	13
SEN Support	28	35	27	36
CLA	46	46	44	nk

LA Maintained Schools	74	76	75	77
Academy Schools	65	76	68	76

KS1 Maths - % Greater Depth				
Group	2017		2018	
	Walsall	National	Walsall	National
All Pupils	15	21	16	22
Disadvantaged	8	11	10	12
FSM	8	10	9	11
SEN With statements or EHC plan	1	2	1	2
SEN Support	1	5	2	5
CLA	4	6	nk	nk

LA Maintained Schools	18	21	17	22
Academy Schools	14	21	15	21

73% of pupils have reached the Expected Standard and above in Reading in Walsall. This is compared to 75% nationally. In Writing, 65% of pupils have achieved the threshold compared to 70% nationally. In Maths, 74% achieved at least the expected standard which is two percentage points below the national outcome of 76%. There has been an improvement in the percentage of pupils achieving greater depth across all subjects this year, most notably in Reading where the Walsall average has increased by 2 percentage points.

KS2 Reading

KS2 Reading - % Expected standard or above				
Group	2017		2018	
	Walsall	National	Walsall	National
All Pupils	65	72	72	75
Disadvantaged	53	60	63	64
FSM	51	55	58	60
SEN With statements or EHC plan	10	15	18	16
SEN Support	24	37	30	43
CLA	45	45	58	nk

LA Maintained Schools	66	73	74	nk
Academy Schools	59	71	65	nk

KS2 Reading - % Working at the higher standard				
Group	2017		2018	
	Walsall	National	Walsall	National
All Pupils	19	25	24	28
Disadvantaged	10	14	17	18
FSM	9	12	13	16
SEN With statements or EHC plan	0	4	6	4
SEN Support	3	7	4	9
CLA	3	9	nk	nk

LA Maintained Schools	19	nk	25	nk
Academy Schools	15	nk	19	nk

KS2 Writing

KS2 Writing - % Expected standard or above				
Group	2017		2018	
	Walsall	National	Walsall	National
All Pupils	74	76	76	78
Disadvantaged	64	66	66	67
FSM	58	61	59	62
SEN With statements or EHC plan	6	13	13	13
SEN Support	24	34	26	38
CLA	59	47	45	nk

LA Maintained Schools	76	77	78	nk
Academy Schools	68	77	70	nk

KS2 Writing - % Greater Depth				
Group	2017		2018	
	Walsall	National	Walsall	National
All Pupils	11	18	13	20
Disadvantaged	6	10	6	11
FSM	5	8	4	9
SEN With statements or EHC plan	0	1	0	2
SEN Support	1	3	1	3
CLA	3	6	nk	nk

LA Maintained Schools	12	nk	14	nk
Academy Schools	7	nk	9	nk

KS2 Maths

KS2 Maths - % Expected standard or above				
Group	2017		2018	
	Walsall	National	Walsall	National
All Pupils	68	75	74	75
Disadvantaged	56	63	64	64
FSM	51	59	58	59
SEN With statements or EHC plan	10	15	18	15
SEN Support	27	41	31	42
CLA	45	46	52	nk

LA Maintained Schools	70	76	75	nk
Academy Schools	61	75	69	nk

KS2 Maths - % Working at the higher standard				
Group	2017		2018	
	Walsall	National	Walsall	National
All Pupils	19	23	21	24
Disadvantaged	10	13	13	14
FSM	8	11	8	12
SEN With statements or EHC plan	0	3	2	3
SEN Support	2	5	2	6
CLA	14	7	nk	nk

LA Maintained Schools	19	nk	21	nk
Academy Schools	17	nk	19	nk

KS2 Reading, Writing and Maths Combined

KS2 RWM - % Expected standard or above				
Group	2017		2018	
	Walsall	National	Walsall	National
All Pupils	53	61	61	64
Disadvantaged	39	48	49	51
FSM	36	43	42	46
SEN With statements or EHC plan	3	8	6	8
SEN Support	11	21	14	24
CLA	34	32	36	nk
LA Maintained Schools	55	62	63	nk
Academy Schools	48	61	53	nk

KS2 RWM - % Working at the higher standard				
Group	2017		2018	
	Walsall	National	Walsall	National
All Pupils	5	9	6	10
Disadvantaged	2	4	3	4
FSM	2	3	1	4
SEN With statements or EHC plan	0	1	0	1
SEN Support	0	1	0	1
CLA	0	1	nk	nk
LA Maintained Schools	6	9	7	nk
Academy Schools	3	8	6	nk

The percentage of pupils in Walsall who achieved the expected standard or above in combined Reading, Writing and maths stands at 61%, a significant improvement of 8% from 2017. Walsall have narrowed the gap to national from 8% to 3%. Achievement at a higher standard shows that 6% of Walsall pupils achieved this threshold compared to 10% nationally, a 1% increase from last year. There has been improvements in the percentage of pupils achieving a higher standard across all subjects this year, most notably in Reading where the Walsall average has increased by 5 percentage points.

KS1-2 Average Progress

KS1-KS2 Reading Average Progress				
Group	2017		2018	
	Walsall	National	Walsall	National
All Pupils	-1.1	0.0	-0.3	0.0
Disadvantaged	-2.0	-0.7	-0.7	-0.6
FSM	-2.1	-0.9	-1.1	-0.8
SEN With statements or EHC plan	-4.8	-3.7	-4.7	-3.8
SEN Support	-3.2	-1.2	-1.8	-1.0
CLA	-1.3	-0.7	-0.3	nk
LA Maintained Schools	-1.1	0.1	0.0	nk
Academy Schools	-1.1	-0.2	-1.1	nk

KS1-KS2 Writing Average Progress				
Group	2017		2018	
	Walsall	National	Walsall	National
All Pupils	-0.6	0.0	-0.4	0.0
Disadvantaged	-1.0	-0.4	-1.1	-0.5
FSM	-1.5	-0.7	-1.4	-0.7
SEN With statements or EHC plan	-5.3	-4.3	-5.7	-4.2
SEN Support	-2.8	-2.2	-2.5	-1.9
CLA	1.0	-0.9	-1.2	nk
LA Maintained Schools	-0.6	0.0	-0.2	nk
Academy Schools	-0.7	0.1	-1.1	nk

KS1-KS2 Maths Average Progress				
Group	2017		2018	
	Walsall	National	Walsall	National
All Pupils	-0.8	0.0	0.2	0.0
Disadvantaged	-1.7	-0.6	-0.4	-0.6
FSM	-2.1	-0.9	-0.9	-0.8
SEN With statements or EHC plan	-5.8	-4.1	-4.2	-3.8
SEN Support	-2.5	-1.1	-1.2	-1.0
CLA	0.2	-1.1	1.1	nk
LA Maintained Schools	-0.8	0.1	0.3	nk
Academy Schools	-0.9	0.0	-0.1	nk

The progress of Walsall children has improved across all subjects in 2018 especially in maths. Progress for Disadvantaged pupils has improved in Reading and in Maths where Walsall is better than the National progress rate.

KS4 Overall (2018 data is based the October KS4 school data checking file and is unvalidated)

Group	KS4 - % pupils achieving in English and in maths								Progress 8			
	2017				2018				2017		2018	
	Grade 4+ Inc E & M		Grade 5+ Inc E & M		Grade 4+ Inc E & M		Grade 5+ Inc E & M		Progress 8		Progress 8	
	Walsall	National	Walsall	National	Walsall	National	Walsall	National	Walsall	National	Walsall	National
All Pupils	55	59	57	59	34	40	36	40	-0.25	0.00	-0.19	0.00
Disadvantaged	36	45	40	44	19	25	21	25	-0.62	-0.40	-0.52	nk
FSM	30	40	40	45	15	22	21	25	-0.74	-0.48	nk	nk
SEN With statements/EHC plan	4	11	8	11	2	5	3	5	-1.13	-1.04	-1.13	nk
SEN Support	20	30	24	31	9	16	11	17	-0.61	-0.43	-0.60	nk
CLA	21	18	17	nk	6	7	9	nk	-1.37	-1.18	nk	nk
LA Maintained Schools	56	63	53	nk	34	41	30	nk	-0.4	-0.1	-0.2	nk
Academy Schools	56	66	58	nk	35	45	37	nk	-0.2	0.0	-0.2	nk

From 2017 results, GCSEs in England are being reformed in English and mathematics and will be graded with a new scale from 9 to 1, with 9 being the highest grade. For most other subjects the new grades will be awarded in 2018. A new grade 4 will be seen as a "standard pass" and a grade 5 as a "strong pass". The Grade 5 'strong pass' will be included in the new accountability measure for schools.

Provisionally, 57% of Walsall pupils have achieved a Grade 4 or above in English and maths compared to 36% of pupils who achieved a Grade 5 or above in English and maths. Despite this slight improvement Walsall remain below the national figure. Progress 8 data has improved especially for Disadvantaged pupils..

KS5 Overall (2018 data is based the October KSS school data checking file and is unvalidated. Data by group is currently unavailable)

Please note Walsall and National Figures for KS5 are based on state funded schools only.

KS5 - APS per entry								
Group	2017		2018		2017		2018	
	Walsall	National	Walsall	National	Walsall	National	Walsall	National
A Level Academic								
All Pupils	29.34	31.45	29.01	32.15	29.36	31.65	29.14	32.33

KS5 - APS per entry								
Group	2017		2018		2017		2018	
	Walsall	National	Walsall	National	Walsall	National	Walsall	National
Tech Level Applied General								
All Pupils	42.13	38.47	30.04	31.43	40.44	39.6	30.48	29.01

Average points per entry has declined in Walsall this year across all areas. Based on state funded schools, the APS per entry for the A Level cohort has slightly declined by 0.33 points. The difference in performance for the Academic cohort is less at 0.22 points. A more substantial decline in the Tech Level and Applied General Qualification groups is noted at both a local and national level.

3) Contextual data

Absence (2018 data is based on autumn and spring combined figures only)

Overall Absence	2017		2018	
	Walsall	National	Walsall	National
Primary	4.1	4.0	4.3	4.2
Secondary	5.6	5.4	5.5	5.4
Eligible for FSM	7.1	7.3	nk	nk
SEN With statements/EHC plan	7.8	8.2	nk	nk
SEN Support	6.4	6.3	nk	nk

Persistent Absence	2017		2018	
	Walsall	National	Walsall	National
Primary	8.8	8.3	10.2	9.6
Secondary	14.0	13.5	14.0	13.6
Eligible for FSM	21.2	22.6	nk	nk
SEN With statements/EHC plan	23.7	23.8	nk	nk
SEN Support	18.0	17.8	nk	nk

Exclusions (2018 exclusions data not yet available)

Fixed Term Exclusions	2016		2017	
	Walsall	National	Walsall	National
Primary	1.64	1.21	1.67	1.37
Secondary	8.34	8.46	7.59	9.40
Eligible for FSM	11.38	11.36	9.27	12.54
SEN With statements/EHC plan	17.02	15.04	15.28	15.94
SEN Support	14.54	13.72	11.69	14.76

Permanent Exclusions	2016		2017	
	Walsall	National	Walsall	National
Primary	0.04	0.02	0.07	0.03
Secondary	0.21	0.15	0.24	0.20
Eligible for FSM	0.28	0.22	0.33	0.28
SEN With statements/EHC plan	x	0.16	x	0.16
SEN Support	0.50	0.29	0.71	0.35

Overall Primary absence in Walsall continues to be above national. Primary Persistent absence rates have increased from 8.8 to 10.2. Overall absence in Secondary schools has declined whilst persistent absence rates for secondary schools are unchanged from 2017.

Primary fixed term and permanent exclusions in Walsall have slightly increased from 2016. Secondary fixed term exclusions have reduced in 2017 however Walsall remain below the national average. Fixed term exclusions for pupils eligible for Free school meals and those with SEN support have declined in 2017, against the national trend, whilst permanent exclusions for these pupils show an increase.

Notes:

CLA data provided by LAC Virtual School

2017 and 2018 School, LA and National data taken from NCER Nexus, DfE SFR, DfE Performance Tables/ School checking files.

2018 data is provisional and subject to change.

Absence and exclusions data is based on the latest DfE statistical first release available. x means data not published due to small numbers

Ofsted data as of the 16.11.18 and taken from Ofsted Weekly Report