Cabinet – 21 October 2020

Working Group on Access and Inclusion – Report from the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Portfolio Holder: **Education and Skills**

Service: **Children's Services**

Ward(s) **All**

1. **Aim**

   To present the final report and recommendations of the Working Group on Access and Inclusion, which was established by the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2. **Summary**

   At its meeting on 18 June 2019, the Committee established a working group to carry out an examination of the issues affecting access and inclusion to primary and secondary education in Walsall.

   In order to gain further understanding of these issues, the Working Group has engaged with head teachers of Walsall's primary and secondary schools, officers from the Council's Children's Services Directorate, and with parents/family members of excluded children.

   The Working Group presented its final report and recommendations to the Committee on 10 September 2020. A copy of the report is attached at Appendix 1 and it provides the Working Group's findings.

3. **Recommendation**

   That the Cabinet considers implementing the recommendations from the report of the Working Group on Access and Inclusion.

4. **Report detail – Know**

   Following its establishment, the Working Group identified the following areas for review at its initial meeting:

   - The Local Authority's responsiveness to meeting the demands of parents and schools with reference to the exclusion of pupils from schools in Walsall.

- The effectiveness of the policies and procedures of schools and the Local Authority in relation to the issue of exclusions.
- An assessment of the main reasons for the exclusion of children from schools and the practice of 'off-rolling'.

A further four meetings of the Working Group were held, when documentation was received and interviews were held with head teachers, parents/family members whose children had been excluded from Walsall schools, and officers from the Children's Services Directorate.

The Working Group reviewed this evidence and formulated the conclusions and recommendations that are featured in the attached report.

On 10 September 2020, the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the Working Group's report. The Committee approved the recommendations, as detailed on page 16 of the report, and resolved to recommend to the Cabinet:

That the Cabinet receive the report of the Access and Inclusion Working Group, consider the recommendations contained therein and decide what action, if any, it wishes to undertake.

5. Council Corporate Plan

Children have the best start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.

6. Decide

Overview and Scrutiny Committees can make recommendations to decision-making bodies. In order for their recommendations to be implemented, they need to be considered and agreed by decision-making bodies such as Cabinet.

7. Respond

Due to the significance of the recommendations, a report will be made to a future Cabinet meeting presenting a final response to the Working Group's final report and recommendations.

The Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee has also indicated that it would wish to receive further reports to its future meetings on the implementation and monitoring of the recommendations of the Working Group's report.

8. Review

Subject to any of the Working Group's recommendations being agreed, then reports will be presented to the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet, as necessary.

Background papers

- Presentation made to the Working Group at its meeting on 24 October 2019 (as included within the Working Group report as Appendix 2).
- Walsall Right For Children Inclusion Strategy (as included within the Working Group report as Appendix 3).

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Councillor Daniel Barker –
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Working Group on Access and Inclusion

Final Report

As presented to the
Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee
10 September 2020

Walsall Council

Foreword

The issue of access and inclusion to primary and secondary education for all children 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 these issues and to consider the important related matters 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 Walsall Council Children's Services Directorate, from the head teachers of Walsall schools and from a number of parents whose children have been excluded from school. The Working Group is grateful for this and the particular perspectives and views that were provided 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 children and families and on teachers and school leaders. The review has produced a number of recommendations that it is believed would assist in alleviating some of the problems being encountered and it is the hope of the Working Group that these recommendations will be supported by the Cabinet and the Council and that they will be implemented accordingly.

Councillor Daniel Barker

Member of the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Chair of the Working Group

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Introduction

During the 2018/19 municipal year, the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee established a Working Group on SEND, pupil exclusions and children not accessing education. Having been approved by the Committee on 26 March 2019, the Working Group's report was presented to the Cabinet on 24 April 2019, and the findings and conclusions were noted and the recommendations endorsed for implementation.

At its meeting on 18 June 2019, the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a presentation from officers on the proposed areas of focus for 2019/20 and Members discussed what were to be the Committee's main priorities for the municipal year. This facilitated the preparation of the Committee's work programme, which was approved at the meeting on 3 September 2019. In establishing a Working Group for 2019/20, the Committee agreed that the principal area for review should be access and inclusion in relation to Walsall's primary, secondary and special schools. Therefore, this review should build on the foundations of the work undertaken in 2018/19 and conduct an in-depth examination and review of these issues.

Terms of reference and Membership

Draft terms of reference were discussed and agreed at the Working Group's first meeting on 26 September 2019. The terms of reference, as provided herewith in Appendix 1, were subsequently agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 8 October 2019.

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

Councillor Daniel Barker	Councillor Rose Burley
Councillor Sat Johal	Councillor Pard Kaur

The Working Group has been supported by the following officers of the Council:

Mrs Sharon Kelly	Director of Access & Achievement
Ms Isabel Vanderheeren	Transformation Lead – Children's Services
Dr Paul Fantom	Democratic Services Officer

Methodology

Since its establishment, the Working Group has held five meetings, the first of which took place on 29 September 2019, when there was discussion of the Working Group's terms of reference, the selection of topics and the people to be invited to meet with the Working Group in due course.

The Working group identified the following key areas for review:

- The Local Authority's responsiveness to meeting the demands of parents and schools with reference to the exclusion of pupils from schools in Walsall.
- The effectiveness of the policies and procedures of schools and the Local Authority in relation to the issue of exclusions.
- An assessment of the main reasons for exclusion of children from schools and the practice of 'off-rolling'.

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

- Whom 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 presentation was made to the Working Group at its meeting on 24 October 2019 (See Appendix 2)

Two meetings were held with those people affected by the issues. On 25 November 2019, the Working Group met with five Walsall head teachers and, on 26 February 2020, the Working Group met with five parents/family members whose children had been excluded from Walsall schools. For each meeting, a comprehensive list of questions was devised. These meetings are summarised in the findings section of this report.

A final virtual meeting of the Working Group was held on 17 July 2020, when Councillors met with officers from the Children's Services Directorate of Walsall Council in order to ascertain the Local Authority's perspective on these issues. This meeting is also summarised in the findings section of the report.

The timescale being adhered to by the Working Group had been that this report was to have been presented to the meeting of the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee scheduled for 26 March 2020. However, the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in this meeting being cancelled and so the report will be presented to a future meeting of the Committee, which 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.

Witnesses

The Working Group met with the following witnesses:

Ms Helena Kucharczyk	Head of Performance Improvement & Quality Walsall Council
Ms Julie Jones	Group Manager – Early Help, Walsall Council
Ms Trudy Pyatt	Head of Inclusion, Walsall Council
Mr Rob Thomas	Head of Access, Walsall Council
Ms Davina Clacy	Head teacher, Old Church C of E Primary School
Ms Helen Keenan	Head teacher, Brownhills School
Mr Andy Mill	Head teacher, St John's C of E Primary School
Mr Anthony Orlik	Head teacher, Blue Coat Federation
Mr Keith Whittlestone	Head teacher, Joseph Leckie Academy
Nadia, Claire, Amy, Denise	Mothers of, or Family members having responsibility for, children who have been excluded from Walsall schools

Findings

Overview

At its first meeting held on 29 September 2019, when considering the areas of focus for its investigation, the Working Group determined that the emphasis would be as follows:

<u>The responsibilities of the Local Authority and of schools</u>
- What are the responsibilities of schools in terms of exclusions, matching the needs of excluded children and getting excluded children back into school?
- Is the Authority responsive enough on these issues and what can be done to improve this, if not?
- What improvements can be made to the process of communication and engagement with those parents/families whose children have been excluded from school?
- What are the differences in the way exclusions are handled by Local Authority maintained schools and academies?
- What support is provided by the Authority to schools for student support, to cope with both the behavioural issues and when exclusion of a pupil is occurring?

<u>Resources and processes used by the Local Authority and Schools</u>
- What are the policies and procedures, are these adhered to by the Local Authority and the schools, and do they need periodic review?
- How effective activities and practices such as isolation are when dealing with behavioural issues, as compared with exclusion?
- What are the processes when looked after children are excluded, as compared with other children who are excluded?
- Is there any best practice, nationally or from other local authorities that can be implemented in Walsall?

<u>Allocation arrangements, especially for children with SEN</u>
- What are the allocation arrangements for children with SEN?
- What is the impact of the delays in the EHCP process having on the number of exclusions in Walsall schools?

<u>The practice of 'off-rolling' by some schools</u>
- What are the reasons for 'off-rolling' and what happens when this happens?
- How prevalent is 'off-rolling' in Walsall schools?

<u>General issues</u>
- Are there links for excluded children with vulnerabilities such as SEN and crime?
- What is the impact of social media on the behaviour of children in schools, and whether this is changing for the worse?
- Are there more exclusions in primary or secondary sectors and, if so, why?
- What are parents' perspectives on exclusion when it affects their children?
- What happens to children when they are excluded from school?
- What steps are taken to get excluded children back into school?

The Working Group requested that the following data/information be provided:

- How many pupils are excluded from Walsall schools each year?
- What are the main reasons for exclusion?
- What are the typical periods of exclusion?
- Are there any noticeable differences/trends with regard to localities in Walsall?
- Do schools operate with the same/similar policies regarding exclusion?
- How prevalent is the process of 'off-rolling' in Walsall?
- What training is available for teachers and managers in schools and staff in the Local Authority for dealing with situations that could lead to pupil exclusion?
- Which schools in Walsall (primary and secondary) have the greatest number of exclusions over the last five years?
- What numbers of looked after children are excluded?

On 24 October 2019, the Working Group received a presentation (see Appendix 2) in which the following key statistics were highlighted as relevant for this investigation:

- In 2019, there were 67,211 children and young people (aged 0-17) residing in Walsall, constituting 23.9% of the overall population of 281,293. According to the January 2019 school census, there are 53,593 children on the school roll in Walsall.
- Walsall's children and young people have more health challenges compared with their peers and, according to the Indices of Deprivation Affecting Children (IDACI), Walsall is the 27th most deprived local authority in the country, with 39 (23%) of its neighbourhoods in the top 10% of most deprived neighbourhoods nationally.
- In both primary and secondary schools, more Walsall children have English as an additional language.
- Although they are improving, when compared with Walsall's national, regional or statistical neighbours, the academic outcomes for Walsall's children are generally worse than in these other local authorities.
- When compared with Walsall's national, regional or statistical neighbours, fewer of Walsall's children have an identified special educational need, or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- There are 122 state-funded schools in Walsall (85 primary, 19 secondary, 7 special, 8 nurseries, 3 pupil referral units and 7 independent schools) and, as at 31 March 2019, 79% of Walsall schools were rated as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.
- In 2019, there were 3,582 on-time applications for places in Walsall primary schools and 89.4% or applicants received their first choice; there were 3,498 applications for places in Walsall secondary schools and 72.9% received their first choice. There were 357 children not offered one of their top three primary preferences and 255 children not offered one of their type three secondary preferences.
- There are a higher number of Walsall Children absent from school than in the regional and national neighbouring local authorities. The 2018 published data indicated that 0.12% of children had been permanently excluded from a Walsall school and 4.13% who had received a fixed term exclusion from a Walsall school.
- The number of children and young people with an EHCP is increasing, with 2,036 children having this as at June 2019, and most children with identified SEN are attending mainstream schools in Walsall.

The schools' perspective

What are the challenges you face when dealing with exclusions?

Head teachers felt that the most significant issues were the provision of funding, the quality of support available and dealing with the pressure on the number of school places generally because of the disparity between the availability of school places and the demand for them in particular areas of the Borough.

The heads recognised that there was only so much that they and their schools could do and the lack of layered support made it difficult for Heads and schools, particularly when CAMHS support was not always available. The Heads stated that support of this nature had been available previously but had been replaced by the locality model, which was taking time to bed-in.

The additional pressures of parents having legal representation and not receiving comparable support from the Council. They considered that when dealing with a serious incident, the range of questioning from parents' legal representatives made it feel like a court and added to the stress of the whole process.

The Heads noted that there were problems when their counterparts in other schools refused to accept those children who had been excluded and were in need of a second chance and a new start, and who had been referred via the Fair Access Protocol Panel for re-integration into school.

The Heads felt that they had not always been treated well by the Local Authority. At many of the meetings held, they felt that they are being told off because the number of exclusions was too high and they were expected to both reduce exclusions and to find places in schools for all children who had been excluded or who had moved into Walsall. They felt that in the past the high turnover of staff and culture in Children's Services had been detrimental to the relationship between schools and the Authority.

Permanent or temporary exclusions

In recognising the differences between the two types of pupil exclusions, the Heads noted that there had been a notable increase in the number of permanent exclusions in primary schools.

The Heads emphasised the pressures on head teachers and their staff from the parents of excluded pupils (who were resisting exclusion), and from parents of other pupils (demanding to know why a particular pupil is still in the school and has not been excluded). Parents could be challenging to work with when there was a need to engage with them, given that some exhibit behaviour such as undermining staff in front of children. The Heads noted that many of their colleagues felt guilt when pupils were excluded but the challenges could be so great, there might be no alternative, and a child could not continue in the school for a number of reasons. The problem, therefore, was that in such cases the schools run out of options and feel that no help is available.

The Heads referred to the complexity of issues and lack of a layered infrastructure is often the biggest issue. Some of the issues may also relate to child's experience at home or be when children are the victims of domestic violence, and so the schools might use isolation rather than exclusion, because exclusion may not be in the best interests of the child. They pointed out that Heads do not wish to exclude pupils but that there may be no other option when it is not safe for a child (or other children) if this is not done. The Heads referred to the variable quality of early providers. Local authority nurseries tended to be good but the private ones could be unsatisfactory. Therefore, children with severe vulnerabilities might not have been diagnosed before they came into school. Also, communications between nurseries and schools was not always good.

What support can the Local Authority provide to support schools?

In considering this, the Heads recognised the pressures that had been placed on Local Authority services and staff, with educational psychology services and behavioural support both being reduced and this had caused problems for families when attempting to access services. Consequently, schools have had to pay for these services out of their own budgets and there was not a pooled provision.

The Heads urged that support be joined-up due to problems with other agencies either not helping or services not connecting. Schools felt isolated, and that resources should be made more readily available and high quality people recruited and retained with staff being redeployed, if necessary. A more joined up response should include health visitors and midwives because children were coming into primary schools with significant issues that had not been diagnosed prior to this. There was a need for a proper centralised and co-ordinated infrastructure of support for children and schools.

The need for early interventions, to identify behavioural problems and stop them from becoming worse when children reach school, was noted and that children with behavioural problems have high needs, and they often require educational psychology or SEN support (and assessments) but it has often been a struggle for this to be done. This would include EHCP and other specialist support. If this could be done, it would make a huge difference and it should be done because it is the child's entitlement to receive it. However, as a child had to be on roll at a school to go through the EHCP process, this should be made more flexible, as the CAMHS service was struggling to meet demand.

When decisions are made that put pressure on already limited services, if good advice was available from the SEN Service and on autism it would take some of the pressure off the educational psychology service, especially in relation to autism and bullying issues.

It is a problem that funding did not follow the child and, after exclusion, the funding did not always follow when the child was placed with another school. Therefore, the Local Authority needed to commit to there being a proper package around those children who had previously been excluded or who were at risk of exclusion. If there are children who are on the verge of being excluded from school, it would help if there can be an early intervention into schools without all the bureaucracy and funding issues.

How can communication with parents be improved?

The Heads considered that it is a major issue when a pupil is failing and their parents will not attend the meetings. This was not always about language barriers as these could usually be overcome; it is when parents effectively give up on their own child and refuse to engage with the process. Communication could be a negative process when parents were of this type. The Heads felt that schools needed to have more backing on these issues and to have 'teeth' because the parents knew schools did not have the powers to tackle this and their options were limited as a result.

There were concerns about children being out of school for a year or more and the impact this had as children could easily get into bad habits that would disrupt their learning when they came back into schools.

In secondary schools, it was often the case that parents are frightened of their own (older) children and, by then, the problems are deeply entrenched and more difficult to resolve, so early intervention was the key to this. The Heads felt that they often had to educate the parents as well as their pupils when the process happened, as well as having to deal with the complex needs of the children.

Policies and procedures

The Heads considered that the Fair Access Protocol, which local authorities are required to produce in accordance with the 2014 School Admissions Code to ensure that outside of the normal admissions round unplaced and especially vulnerable children are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible, should have a true consultation period. When introduced at the end of the school year, they felt that the Protocol was in effect being imposed upon schools.

The Heads felt that co-location of some services delivered by Children's Services was a good idea but the opportunity to do this has been missed. Better use could be made of facilities at or near to schools as these were currently under-utilised because many schools did not have enough space.

The parents' perspective

How have the schools responded?

The parents described the circumstances of their children and the experience of the possibility of exclusion by the schools but their experience was not always positive. Difficulties had been encountered because, in some cases, the children were not attending their preferred schools and there were difficulties in their parents getting them to school due to the distances that had to be travelled to school in the morning, especially when reliant on public transport and given the costs incurred.

The benefits of early intervention were noted by the parents, with one parent described that her child had ADHD, dyslexia and dyspraxia. These had not been recognised initially, contributing to the exclusion from school, but the next school attended had carried out the necessary steps to have an assessment completed and the situation had been turned around. Consequently, her other children now attended this school. There was inconsistency and variability in the approaches taken by the different schools.

Other parents indicated that applications had been commenced for EHCPs but that the schools had not provided the necessary information. Consequently, one of the children affected had not attended school for over a year and had threatened to take their own life. Parents felt that there was limited accountability and no one was prepared to take responsibility for what had happened. It was considered that all teachers should be better trained in relation to the EHCP process, which would give them a greater understanding.

What are the challenges when your child is excluded?

Parents felt that when their children had been excluded for behavioural problems, and they wanted to return to school there had been limited help. In some cases, they were told that they had to 'fail before we can help you'. Private tuition had not been particularly helpful and the situation had become even more frustrating.

Some parents felt it difficult to express themselves when faced with the professionals at the school or other agencies. Others felt that they or their children were not listened to properly by the teachers, that their concerns were not taken seriously and their children were excluded without this always being necessary.

What support would you like to be available?

The parents considered that the teachers and other professionals needed to have a better understanding of their children via increased SENCO support and listen to them. Increased training for teachers in relation to autism and anxiety issues was also suggested by the parents. They wished to see the EHCP process made more responsive and easier to understand with greater accountability.

The parents felt that some of the communications from the school were not always easy to understand, for example legalistic language in letters that limited their ability to respond. During discussion, the issue of whether mediation would be beneficial was raised with the parents. They were generally receptive to this but were cautious about it being no more than a buffer and they would still have to deal with the same teachers.

The Local Authority's perspective

<u>Introduction</u>

The officers stated that one of the issues being looked at is the exclusion from schools of children in Walsall, what are the underlying factors for why exclusion rates are high, what are the reasons behind that and how the Authority can work together with schools more effectively to identify what they are. From the officer perspective, there were also a number of operational considerations concerning legalities and roles and responsibilities, particularly given the local and national context. Then, with elected Member support and direction, it would be possible to make progress on this important issue.

The importance of recognising the real changes in the world of education, particularly in terms of the creation and operation of academies, with funding now going directly to schools, was noted. Furthermore, it was pointed out that some partner organisations and schools were not always fully up-to-date regarding developments, and the revision of roles and responsibilities (including ethical and legal considerations) and the changes to cultures and behaviours required. Hence, one of the roles of the Local Authority was to signpost to schools the availability of services and support.

In terms of schools funding, it was pointed out that Walsall was in the lowest 10 per cent of local authorities.

<u>Early Help and school exclusions</u>

Early Help is a non-statutory function, which Walsall Council operates, and which has responsibility on the prevention side, for supporting young people and their families, with the aim of not having to have recourse to statutory services.

In November 2019, the multi-agency inclusion and wellbeing service was put in place, with early help practitioners, school health/nurses, and speech and language colleagues, and with support from educational psychologists and dedicated PCSOs (Police Community Support Officers). The benefits of this integrated approach were noted.

There are three parts to the Early Help offer:

1. Earlier intervention, i.e. when there is a risk of a child being excluded, for the school to let the Early help service know, if it is not already involved from an Early Help perspective, so that there can be an intervention and support on a one-to-one basis and with the family to prevent the exclusion from happening.

2. Restorative practice offer to all schools in the Borough, so that training sessions over 3 days on this can then be cascaded throughout schools. This approach has been based on work carried out by Hull Council, which has been found to be extremely effective in reducing the number of exclusions.

3. Inclusive and targeted offer to schools and academies, or where there are concerns regarding particular schools with high numbers of exclusions, so that learning and implementation of restorative practice can be supported and enhanced in the schools concerned.

It was noted that the Schools Forum took the decision to cease behavioural support, which was not a statutory service and was not always what the schools needed. However, some schools have now chosen to buy this service in. The Council was attempting to plug the gap through the service provided by the Early Help team.

Inclusion

In terms of the Covid-19 pandemic, the service was aware that children were going through potentially some traumatic experiences and had been isolated from school friends, which it was anticipated would have a detrimental effect on their behaviours.

Work was being carried out with schools for the reset and recovery work that would be required in terms of curriculum and school ethos. There was a focus on raising the attainment of disadvantaged children and young people and supporting schools regarding the 'disadvantaged gap', which was widening due to some children not being in schools and not having access to remote learning, or having the support at home for development learning. Preparation on mental health first aid training was being carried out with schools in readiness for the return of pupils.

In terms of the work on exclusions, there is the inclusive schools policies and strategies, and there is close liaison with the schools to set out what that means in practice. The specialist provision across the whole of the Borough continues to be monitored to ensure the right pupils in the right place at the right time, and for the right length of time, with there being attention on the special schools to ensure that they can meet the needs of pupils coming through the system. It was noted that all schools were moving with the Authority and had a better understanding of the ethos and vision of the Council, especially over recent months.

Admissions and attendance

The Access service is responsible for admissions and exclusions, education welfare and support, elective home education, and the capital delivery of projects.

It was noted that since the start of the 2019/20 academic year, there had been a reduction in the number of exclusions, due to the embedding of the inclusive schools policies and strategies, and the preventative work carried out. This was reflected in the various categories, which were significantly down this year, even allowing for the Covid-19 pandemic. There were improvements in terms of the children missing education.

In terms of the Fair Access policy, it was noted that whilst this document is co-ordinated by the Local Authority, it has to be owned and run by the schools, who have to agree it and then the Authority then has to ensure that schools adhere to it.

Conclusions

The Working Group was established to investigate:

- The Local Authority's responsiveness to meeting the demands of parents and schools with reference to the exclusion of pupils from schools in Walsall.
- The effectiveness of the policies and procedures of schools and the Local Authority in relation to the issue of exclusions.
- An assessment of the main reasons for exclusion of children from schools and the practice of 'off-rolling'.

In relation to these aims, the Access and Inclusion Working Group met with Head teachers from Walsall schools, parents/carers, and officers from the Children's Services Directorate. In response to questions, the Working Group listened to their concerns. Based on the evidence received, it was found that work is already in progress to address many of the issues raised. The Working Group reached the following conclusions:

1. That there is a recognition that schools in the Borough have been and continue 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.

2. That based on the evidence presented, the provision of support to children in the Borough with SEND needs requires further consideration in relation to the support that can be provided to schools, parents and children.

3. That the completion of the EHCP process in a timely and efficient manner is of paramount importance to ensuring that those children with behavioural difficulties receive the support they require, and to work to prevent them from being excluded from school, whether permanently or temporarily. Therefore, the EHCP digital hub offer should ensure teachers are better trained in relation to the EHCP process.

4. The 'Walsall Right 4 Children' (WR4C) programme should ensure that the Council's support to schools is more joined-up and includes health visitors and midwives. It should also lead to early interventions into schools to identify behavioural problems without the bureaucracy or funding issues that schools have experienced previously. It should provide a proper package to children previously excluded or at risk of exclusion. Moreover, through the Locality model, it should ensure the co-location of relevant services, through a co-ordinated infrastructure of support for children and a better use of facilities at or near to schools.

5. The procurement of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) and development of an education psychology offer should lead to an increase in good advice from the SEN Service, especially in relation to autism and bullying issues, and take pressure off the educational psychology service.

6. All of these aspects require ongoing monitoring by the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee to ensure that the promised benefits are realised.

Recommendations

To ensure that all the issues identified receive crucial attention, it is recommended that the report of the Working Group be endorsed by the Cabinet and/or the Council and that the following recommendations are made to the Executive Director (Children's Services) for consideration and implementation as appropriate, with an update after six months:

1. That Walsall Council's local offer to schools should be developed to ensure that more resources are readily available to equip schools to cope better with difficult behaviour from children with special needs.

2. That Walsall schools and their HR providers should be encouraged to ensure that their policies support the recruitment and retention of high quality members of staff to address most effectively the particular needs of Walsall children.

3. That further guidance and support be given to schools to ensure that when they are dealing with uncooperative parents, the powers available to the schools are fully understood and used effectively and appropriately.

4. That the Fair Access Protocol, which is co-ordinated by the Local Authority but which has to be agreed by and owned by the schools adhering to it, should have a true consultation period.

5. That via the local offer to Walsall schools, which are able to buy in the service from the Local Authority, support for SENCO and training on autism and anxiety issues should be increased so that both teachers and professionals have a better understanding of Walsall children.

6. That the EHCP process should be speeded up as far as is practicable, be made easier to understand, and be more responsive/flexible and accountable to the wishes of parents and carers.

Appendix 1: Working Group Initiation Document

Work Group Name:	Working group on Access and Inclusion
Committee:	Education Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Municipal Year:	2019/20
Lead Member:	Councillor Chris Towe
Lead Officer:	Mrs Sharon Kelly, Assistant Director – Access & Achievement
Support Officer:	Dr Paul Fantom, Democratic Services Officer
Membership:	Councillor Daniel Barker (Chair of the working group)
	Councillor Rose Burley
	Councillor Sat Johal
	Councillor Pard Kaur
Co-opted Members:	N/A

1.	**Context**
	During the 2018/19 municipal year, the Education Overview & Scrutiny Committee established a working group on SEND, pupil exclusions and children not accessing education. Having been approved by the Committee on 26 March 2019, the group's report was presented to the Cabinet on 24 April 2019, and the findings and conclusions were noted and recommendations were endorsed for implementation, as appropriate.
	In establishing a working group for the 2019/20 municipal year, the Committee agreed that the principal area for review should be access and inclusion in relation to Walsall's primary, secondary and special schools. Therefore, this review will build on the foundations of the work that was undertaken by the above-mentioned previous working group, and will allow this group to conduct a detailed and in-depth examination. The working group's recommendations will be presented in due course.

2.	**Objectives**
	The working group has identified the following key areas for the review:
	• The Local Authority's responsiveness to meeting the demands of schools and parents with reference to exclusions in Walsall.
	• The effectiveness of the policies and procedures of schools and the Local Authority in relation to the issues of exclusion.
	• Assessing the main reasons for the exclusion of children and young people from schools and the practice of 'off-rolling' being carried out in some schools in Walsall
	The working group propose to submit a report to the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 26 March 2020.

3.	**Scope**
	The working group has adopted the following approach:
	• Whom 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?
	It is proposed that a minimum of four meetings of the group are arranged. For each meeting, the people or groups of people that the working group wish to meet with will be identified and invited to attend. 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.

4.	Equalities Implications
	The working group will ensure that its recommendations will take into account the different strands of equality and ensure that no group is disadvantaged.

5.	Who else will you want to take part?
	• Assistant Director - Access & Achievement • Strategic Improvement Lead - SEND • Service Manager - Admissions and Pupil Place Planning • Head teachers from Walsall primary, secondary and special schools • Groups representing parents and children and young people • Others (to be determined by the working group)

6.	Timescales & Reporting Schedule		
	Date	**Action**	**Who**
	26 September 2019	Terms of reference	Working group
	8 October 2019	Agree terms of reference	Committee
	TBC – October 2019	Consider data/information to be provided by Children's Services Directorate to provide context and assist with formulating questions	Working group
	TBC November 2019	Interviews	Working group
	TBC January 2020	Interviews	Working group
	TBC February 2020	Interviews/wrap-up	Working group
	20 March 2020	Present final report	Committee

7.	Risk factors		
	Risk	**Likelihood**	**Measure to Resolve**
	Being unable to cover all identified themes within available time	High	Organise a schedule of meetings to plan ahead where possible
	Officer time available to support the working group may limit its ability to deliver the outcomes desired	High	One meeting of the working group to deal with each issue/group.
	Interviewees may feel intimidated by formal committee setting	High	Minimise by interviewing some participants in groups, rather than individually

Date Agreed:		Date Updated:	

Appendix 2: Outcomes for Children in Walsall Presentation

Outcomes for children in Walsall - presentation for Access and Inclusion Working Group, October 2019

Walsall Council

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Children Living in Walsall

Population of 281,293

67,211 (23.9%) of whom are children aged 0-17

The number of children and young people aged 0-17 is projected to rise to 71,097 by 2025

Children and young people have more health challenges than their peers

4.2% of babies are born with a low birth weight

compared with 3.3% for star neighbours, 3.1% in the West Midlands and 2.8% nationally

6.2 per 1000 children die before their first birthday

compared with 4.2 for star neighbours, 3.9 in the West Midlands and 3.9 nationally

2.7% of young girls get pregnant at 15,16 or 17

compared with 2.2% for star neighbours, 2.0% in the West Midlands and 1.6% nationally

6.6 per 10,000 would be admitted to hospital as an inpatient for mental health issues

compared with 7.3 for star neighbours, 8.7 in the West Midlands and 8.5 nationally

1.4 per 10,000 admitted to hospital for alcohol related issues

compared with 3.3 for star neighbours, 2.8 in the West Midlands and 3.4 nationally

23.9% of the population are children and young people

2017 mid-year population estimates

- 0-17
- 18 and over

31.2% of Children are from BME backgrounds

2011 Census

- BME
- White

29% of children are aged 0-4, 29% are aged 5-9, 27% are aged10-14 and 15% are aged 15-17

2017 mid-year population estimates

- 0-4
- 5-9
- 10-14
- 15-17

Deprivation levels are high

In the Indices of Deprivation Affecting Children (IDACI) Walsall is the **27th most deprived Local Authority** in the country with 39 (23%) of neighbourhoods in the top 10% of most deprived neighbourhoods nationally which is the 23rd highest. **Two of Walsall's three parliamentary constituencies are in the top 25 constituencies** with the highest levels of child poverty

32.5% of children live in poverty before housing costs, this increases by 8.5%pts to 41% after housing costs

- In poverty – before hc
- In poverty – after hc
- not in poverty

Campaign to end child poverty – May 2019

Walsall Council

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Children going to school in Walsall

Walsall has it's challenges....

There are 53,593 children on a school roll in Walsall
January 2019 School Census

Academic outcomes for Walsall children are generally worse than those for statistical, regional and national neighbours – although outcomes are improving and at KS2 progress is better in some subjects

A higher proportion of children are overweight at reception and year 6

24.2% in Reception
compared with 22.5% for stat neighbours, 23.4% in the West Midlands and 22.4% nationally

40.7% at Year 6
compared with 36.7% for stat neighbours, 37.7% in the West Midlands and 34.3% nationally

Significantly more children receive free school meals and numbers are increasing

22.8% at Primary
compared with 19.0% for stat neighbours, 18.6% in the West Midlands and 15.1% nationally

20.5% at Secondary
compared with 16.5% for stat neighbours, 15.4% in the West Midlands and 14.1% nationally

Significantly more children have English as an additional language

24.5% at Primary
compared with 21.3% for stat neighbours, 22.8% in the West Midlands and 21.2% nationally

20.5% at Secondary
compared with 17.0% for stat neighbours, 13.6% in the West Midlands and 16.9% nationally

Fewer children have an identified special educational need

10.9% have SEN Support
compared with 12.8% for stat neighbours, 12.6% in the West Midlands and 11.9% nationally

2.8% have an EHCP
compared with 3.3% for stat neighbours, 3.1% in the West Midlands and 3.1% nationally

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Walsall Council

Schools in Walsall

122 State-funded schools in Walsall

8 Nursery Schools

85 Primary Schools

19 Secondary Schools

7 Special Schools

3 Pupil Referral Units

7 Independent Schools

The percentage of schools that are Good or Outstanding is static and is below that of national and regional neighbours and falling

As at the end of August 78% of schools are rated as good or outstanding

compared with 86% nationally and 84% regionally

Ofsted Inspection Outcomes 31st August 2019

- Outstanding
- Good
- RI
- Inadequate

Please note that this data is from the published Ofsted Management Information – some schools have had recent inspections where there Ofsted rating has changed however, they may not have yet been published

As at 31st March 2019

79% of schools were Good or Outstanding
compared with 84% in the West Midlands and 85% nationally

74% of learners attended Good or Outstanding schools
compared with 82% in the West Midlands and 84% nationally

69% of the most deprived learners attended Good or Outstanding schools
compared with 78% in the West Midlands and 77% nationally

Schools by Type
- LA Maintained
- Academy / Free School

Ofsted Inspection Outcomes by Phase
- Outstanding
- Good
- RI
- Inadequate
- Not Yet Inspected

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Walsall Council

School Place Applications

There were 3582 on time applications for primary school places in 2019

4% increase since 2016 (and 8% increase considered with 2015 when there was a dip in applications

89.4%
Offered their first choice of primary school in 2019

90.0% in 2018, 89.6% in 2017, 89.7% in 2016

5.6%
Offered their second choice of primary school in 2019

5.5% in 2018, 4.6% in 2017, 5.1% in 2016

1.7%
Offered their third choice of primary school in 2019

1.5% in 2018, 1.2% in 2017, 1.6% in 2016

96.7%
Offered one of their primary school preferences in 2019

97.0% in 2018, 95.6% in 2017, 96.4% in 2016

118 children were not offered one of their primary school preferences

There were 3498 on time applications for secondary school places in 2019

10% increase since 2016

72.9%
Offered their first choice of secondary school in 2019

74.6% in 2018, 74.6% in 2017, 76.7% in 2016

12.5%
Offered their second choice of secondary school in 2019

12.2% in 2018, 13.2% in 2017, 11.9% in 2016

4.3%
Offered their third choice of secondary school in 2019

4.6% in 2018, 4.0% in 2017, 4.1% in 2016

89.8%
Offered one of their top 3 secondary school preferences in 2019

91.6% in 2018, 91.7% in 2017, 92.8% in 2016

92.7%
Offered one of their top 5 secondary school preferences in 2019

93.6% in 2018, 94.1% in 2017, 94.8% in 2016

357 children were not offered one of their top three preferences

255 children were not offered one of their secondary school preferences

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Walsall Council

Attendance and Exclusions

Based on published data - 2018

A higher proportion of children are absent from school than among regional and national neighbours

5.0%
Total School Absence
(4.3% primary, 5.7% secondary)

National Rank –
102 (84, 97)

5.0% (4.4%, 5.8%) – stat neighbours
4.9% (4.3%, 5.5%) – West Midlands
4.8% (4.2%, 5.5%) – nationally
Total (Primary, Secondary)

11.9%
Were persistently absent

National Rank –
104

12.4% – stat neighbours
11.6% – West Midlands
11.2% – nationally

3.2%
Authorised School Absence
(2.8% primary, 3.7% secondary)

National Rank –
31 (15, 56)

3.2% (2.9%, 3.5%) – stat neighbours
3.5% (3.0%, 3.9%) – West Midlands
3.5% (3.0%, 3.9%) – nationally
Total (Primary, Secondary)

1.8%
Unauthorised School Absence
(1.6% primary, 2.1% secondary)

National Rank –
120 (125, 116)

1.8% (1.5%, 2.3%) – stat neighbours
1.4% (1.3%, 1.7%) – West Midlands
1.4% (1.1%, 1.6%) – nationally
Total (Primary, Secondary)

Fewer children are excluded from school although numbers have been rising

0.12%
Pupils are permanently excluded
(0.03% primary, 0.23% secondary)

National Rank –
23 (32, 23)

0.14% (0.04%, 0.31%) – stat neighbours
0.13% (0.05%, 0.24%) – West Midlands
0.10% (0.03%, 0.20%) – nationally
Total (Primary, Secondary)

4.13%
Fixed term exclusions as a percentage of the school population
(1.53% primary, 7.56% secondary)

National Rank –
59 (102, 47)

8.46% (1.70%, 19.37%) – stat neighbours
4.77% (1.56%, 8.92%) – West Midlands
5.08% (1.40%, 10.13%) – nationally
Total (Primary, Secondary)

Provisional 2018-19 data suggests that the number of fixed term exclusions fell, but that number of permanent exclusions increased across both primary and secondary

Walsall Council

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Brief Profile of children with SEN in Walsall

Based on published data

The number of children and young people with an EHC plan is increasing

EHC (pre-statements) Plans Maintained by Walsall

As at June 2019 - 2,036

All statements were converted on time but assessment timeliness is poor

In 2018

34.6%

of EHC plans were issued within 20 weeks

Statistical Neighbours – 49.4%
West Midlands – 58.4%
England – 60.1%

Despite population challenges, the number of children and young people with a recognised SEN need attending Walsall Schools is lower than for comparators

In January 2019, Walsall schools reported that:

1,490 (2.8%) pupils

had an Education, Care and Health plan

Statistical Neighbours – 3.3%
West Midlands – 3.1%
England – 3.1%

5,827 (10.9%) pupils

were in receipt of SEN Support

Statistical Neighbours – 12.8%
West Midlands – 12.6%
England – 11.9%

More children with identified SEN attend mainstream schools compared with regional and national

Placement of children with an EHCP
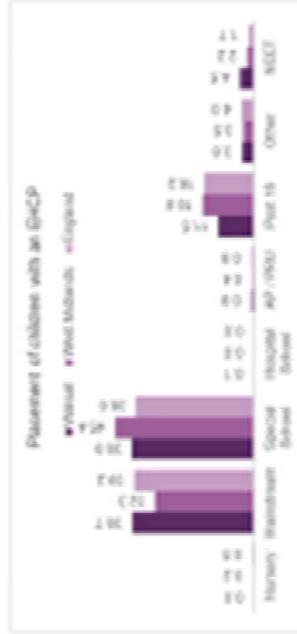
The most prevalent SEN need in all settings is moderate learning difficulty and in primary settings, speech language and communication needs is also prevalent

There are currently 7 special schools in Walsall

2 are Outstanding, 3 are Good, 1 is Requires Improvement 1 is inadequate

(Note taken from the Jan 19 school census and 31st August 2019 Ofsted Management Information)

39.9% of children with EHC Plans maintained by Walsall attend special schools.

Compared with45.4% regionally and 28.4% nationally

1,454 children with an EHCP attend state-funded schools in Walsall. Of these **51%** attend special schools.

Compared with 56% regionally and 49% nationally

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Walsall Council

Early Years in Walsall

Based on published data - 2018

Young children are benefitting from early education

1,251 or 68% of 2 year olds benefit from funded early education

compared with 72% for star neighbours, 68% in the West Midlands and 68% nationally

7,370 or 94% 3 & 4 year olds take up some free education

compared with 92% for star neighbours, 93% in the West Midlands and 94% nationally

68.1% Of children achieve a Good Level of Development

68.2% - star neighbours
69.8% - West Midlands
71.5% - nationally

Fewer 2, 3 & 4 year olds receive that education at providers with staff with graduate status

36% of 2, 3 & 4 year olds are in education at providers with staff with graduate status

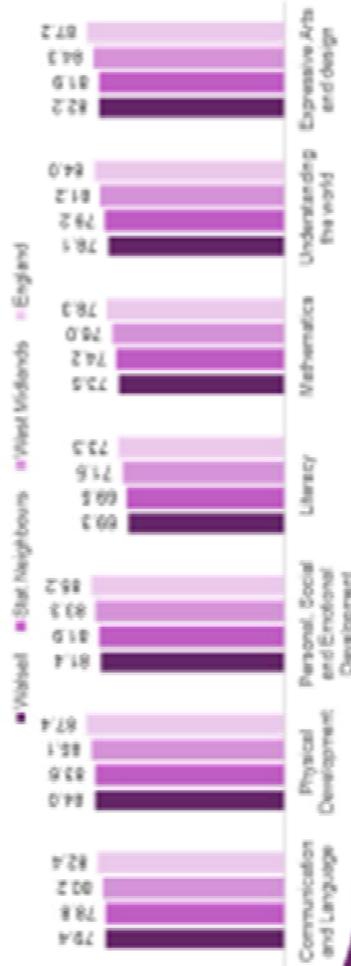compared with 40% for star neighbours, 30% in the West Midlands and 33% nationally

71% Non-Free School Meals

70.5% - star neighbours
72% - West Midlands
74% - nationally

14% Attainment Gap

14.5% - star neighbours
15% - West Midlands
17% - nationally

57% Free School Meals

56% - star neighbours
57% - West Midlands
57% - nationally

EYFSP by Domain

Legend: Walsall · Star Neighbours · West Midlands · England

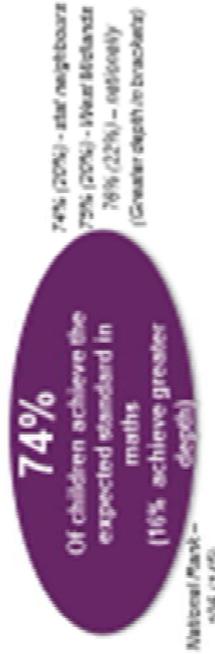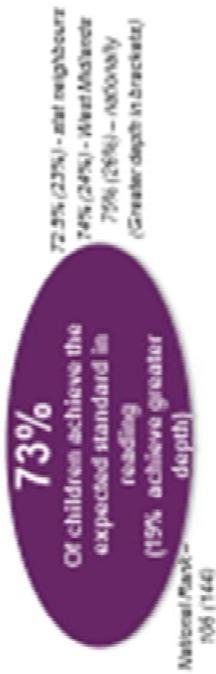| Domain	Walsall	Star Neighbours	West Midlands	England
Communication and Language	79.4	78.8	80.2	82.4
Physical Development	84.0	83.6	85.1	87.4
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	81.4	81.0	83.3	86.1
Literacy	69.3	69.5	71.6	73.3
Mathematics	73.5	74.2	76.0	78.3
Understanding the world	78.1	79.2	81.2	84.0
Expressive Arts and design	82.2	81.0	84.3	87.2

Walsall Council

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Key Stage 1 in Walsall

Based on published data - 2018

Children in Walsall do well in decoding phonics, achieving better than their regional and national peers, even those who are in receipt of Free School Meals
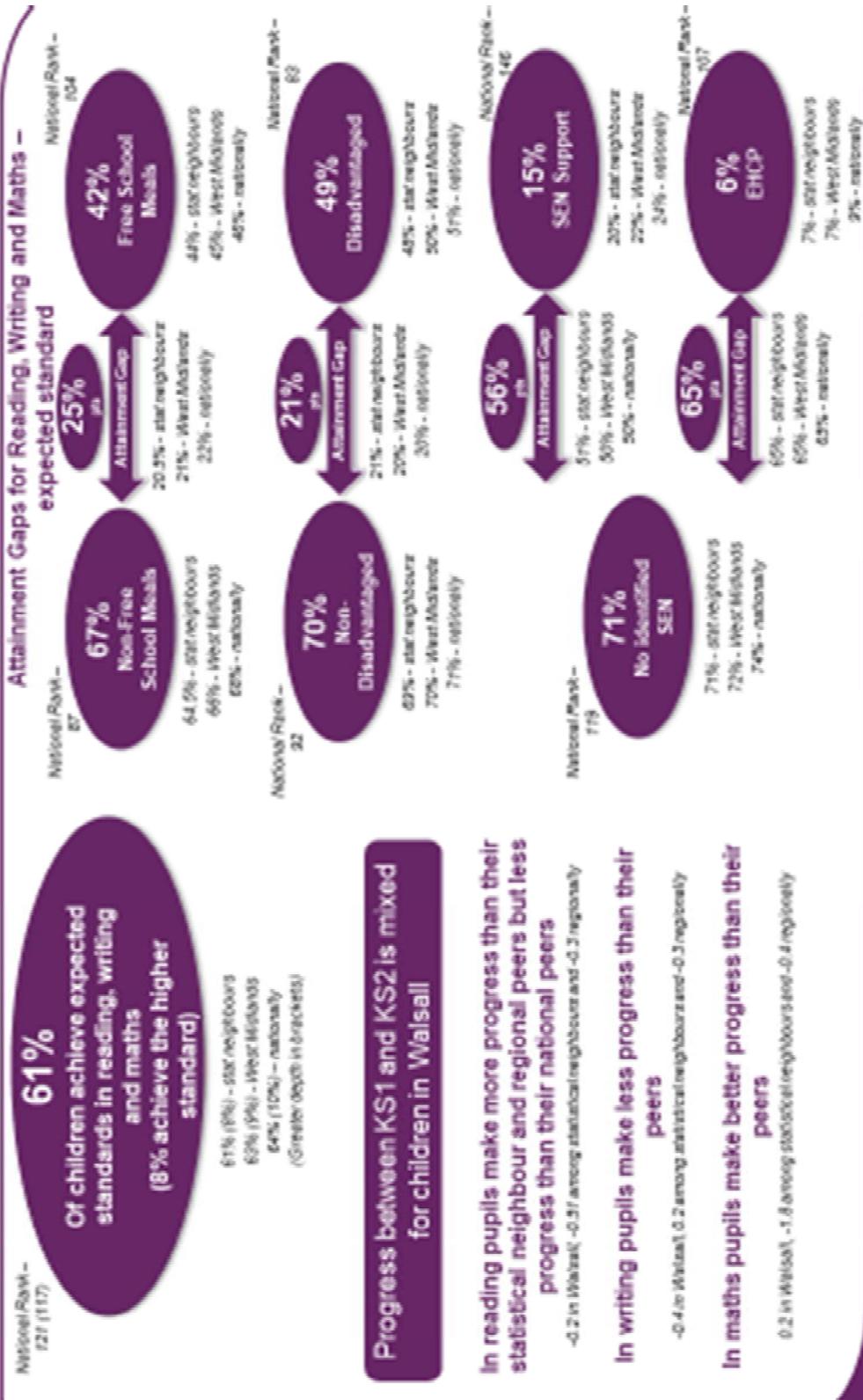
83% of children achieve the expected level in phonics decoding

compared with 81% for star neighbours; 82% in the West Midlands and 82% nationally

75% of children in receipt of free school meals achieve the expected level in phonics decoding

compared with 69% for star neighbours; 72% in the West Midlands and 70% nationally

73%
Of children achieve the expected standard in reading
(19% achieve greater depth)

72.5% (23%) - star neighbours
74% (24%) - West Midlands
75% (25%) - nationally
(Greater depth in brackets)

National Rank – 106 (144)

65%
Of children achieve the expected standard in writing
(19% achieve greater depth)

67% (14%) - star neighbours
69% (15%) - West Midlands
70% (16%) - nationally
(Greater depth in brackets)

National Rank – 139 (146)

74%
Of children achieve the expected standard in maths
(16% achieve greater depth)

74% (20%) - star neighbours
75% (20%) - West Midlands
76% (22%) - nationally
(Greater depth in brackets)

National Rank – 106 (145)

78%
Of children achieve the expected standard in Science

65% - star neighbours
81% - West Midlands
89% - nationally

National Rank – 106 (145)

Key Stage 2 in Walsall
Based on published data - 2018

Attainment Gaps for Reading, Writing and Maths – expected standard

61%
Of children achieve expected standards in reading, writing and maths
(8% achieve the higher standard)

National Rank – 121 (157)

61% (9%) – stat neighbours
63% (9%) – West Midlands
64% (10%) – nationally
(Greater depth in brackets)

67%
Non-Free School Meals
National Rank – 87

64.5% – stat neighbours
66% – West Midlands
68% – nationally

25%
Attainment Gap

20.5% – stat neighbours
21% – West Midlands
22% – nationally

42%
Free School Meals
National Rank – 104

44% – stat neighbours
45% – West Midlands
45% – nationally

70%
Non-Disadvantaged
National Rank – 92

69% – stat neighbours
70% – West Midlands
71% – nationally

21%
Attainment Gap

21% – stat neighbours
20% – West Midlands
20% – nationally

49%
Disadvantaged
National Rank – 82

48% – stat neighbours
50% – West Midlands
51% – nationally

71%
No Identified SEN
National Rank – 119

71% – stat neighbours
72% – West Midlands
74% – nationally

56%
Attainment Gap

51% – stat neighbours
50% – West Midlands
50% – nationally

15%
SEN Support
National Rank – 146

20% – stat neighbours
22% – West Midlands
24% – nationally

65%
Attainment Gap

65% – stat neighbours
65% – West Midlands
65% – nationally

6%
EHCP
National Rank – 107

7% – stat neighbours
7% – West Midlands
9% – nationally

Progress between KS1 and KS2 is mixed for children in Walsall

In reading pupils make more progress than their statistical neighbour and regional peers but less progress than their national peers
-0.2 in Walsall, -0.3 among statistical neighbours and -0.3 regionally

In writing pupils make less progress than their peers
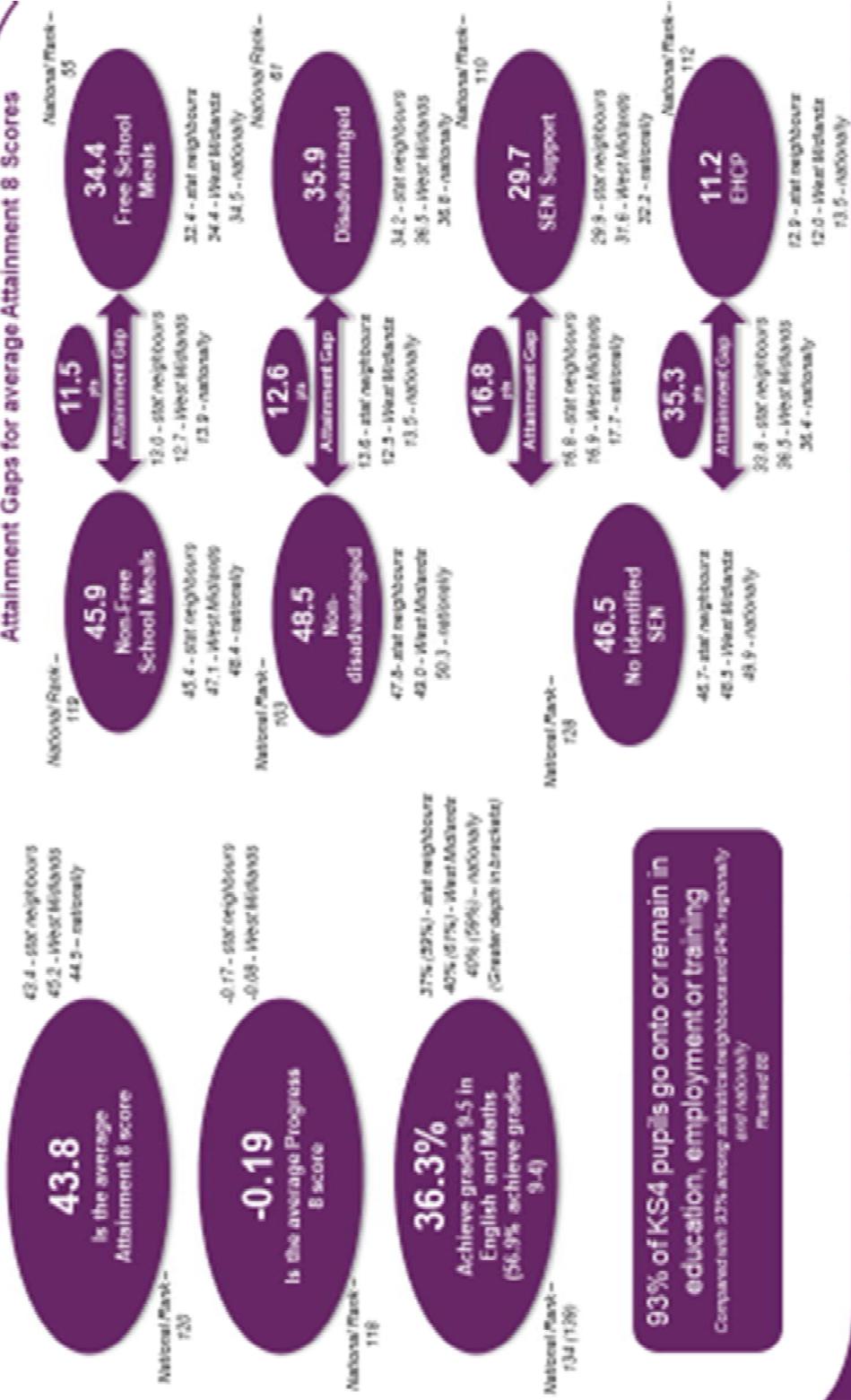-0.4 in Walsall, 0.2 among statistical neighbours and -0.3 regionally

In maths pupils make better progress than their peers
0.2 in Walsall, -1.8 among statistical neighbours and -0.4 regionally

Walsall Council

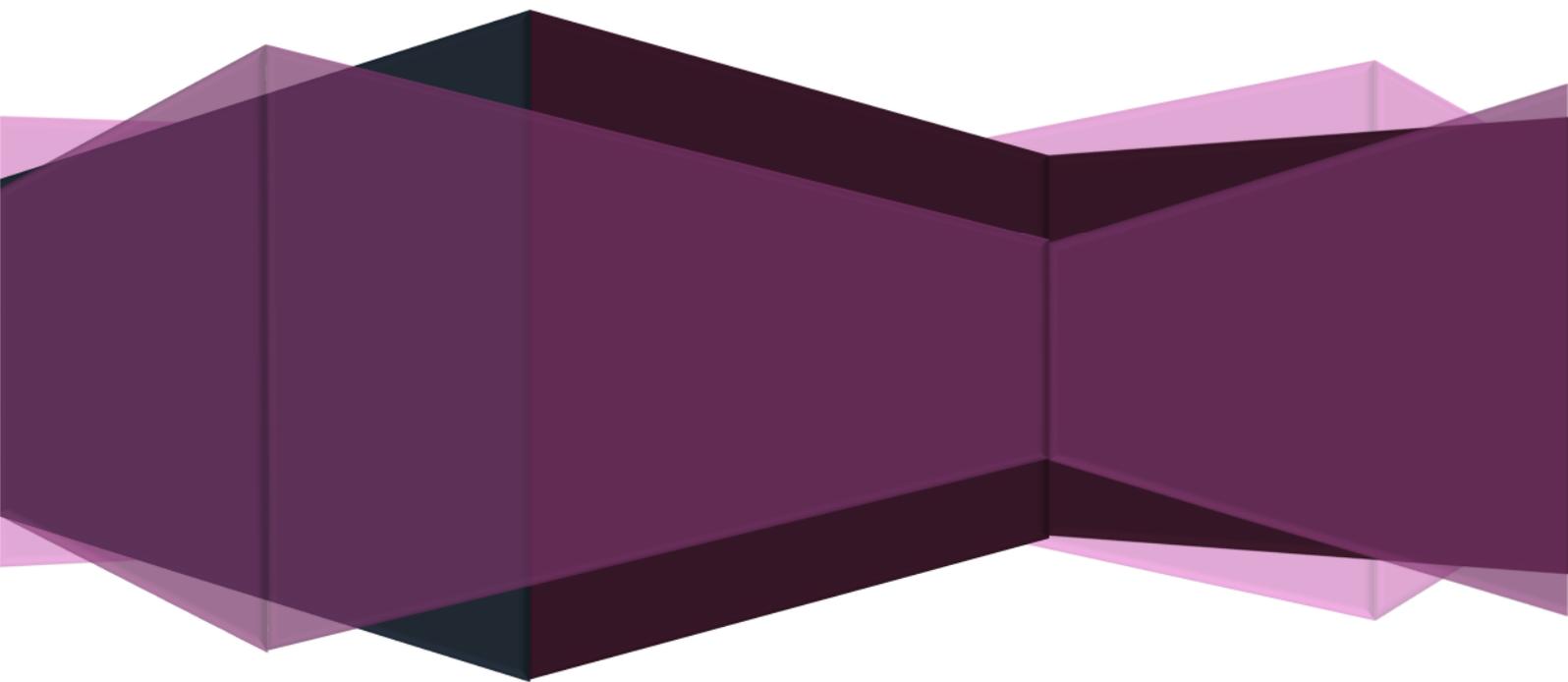PROUD of our PAST our PRESENT and for our FUTURE

Key Stage 4 in Walsall
Based on published data - 2018

43.8 Is the average Attainment 8 score

43.4 – stat neighbours
45.2 – West Midlands
44.5 – nationally

National Rank – 130

-0.19 Is the average Progress 8 score

-0.17 – stat neighbours
-0.08 – West Midlands

National Rank – 118

36.3% Achieve grades 9-5 in English and Maths (56.9% achieve grades 9-4)

37% (29%) – stat neighbours
40% (61%) – West Midlands
40% (59%) – nationally
(Greater depth in brackets)

National Rank – 134 (136)

93% of KS4 pupils go onto or remain in education, employment or training

Compared with 93% among statistical neighbours 94% regionally and nationally

Ranked 86

Attainment Gaps for average Attainment 8 Scores

45.9 Non-Free School Meals

45.4 – stat neighbours
47.1 – West Midlands
48.4 – nationally

National Rank – 119

11.5 pts Attainment Gap

12.0 – stat neighbours
12.7 – West Midlands
13.9 – nationally

34.4 Free School Meals

32.4 – stat neighbours
34.4 – West Midlands
34.5 – nationally

National Rank – 55

48.5 Non-disadvantaged

47.8 – stat neighbours
49.0 – West Midlands
50.3 – nationally

National Rank – 103

12.6 pts Attainment Gap

13.6 – stat neighbours
12.3 – West Midlands
13.5 – nationally

35.9 Disadvantaged

34.2 – stat neighbours
36.5 – West Midlands
36.8 – nationally

National Rank – 61

46.5 No identified SEN

45.7 – stat neighbours
48.5 – West Midlands
49.9 – nationally

National Rank – 128

16.8 pts Attainment Gap

16.8 – stat neighbours
16.9 – West Midlands
17.7 – nationally

29.7 SEN Support

29.9 – stat neighbours
31.6 – West Midlands
32.2 – nationally

National Rank – 110

35.3 pts Attainment Gap

32.8 – stat neighbours
36.5 – West Midlands
36.4 – nationally

11.2 EHCP

12.9 – stat neighbours
12.0 – West Midlands
13.5 – nationally

National Rank – 112

Walsall Council

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Walsall Right for Children
Inclusion Strategy

Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council's mission is to secure the very best opportunities for all its children and young people, in the very best settings with the highest quality teaching and learning to enable them to realize their full potential. Providing academic excellence, and an outstanding social and civic education for every child and young person living in Walsall.

This document reflects Walsall's corporate vision that: **'Inequalities are reduced and all potential is maximised'** and that, 'We are led by the communities we serve who help shape the services we provide, and we help those communities to make a positive difference to their own lives through active civic engagement and co-operation.'[1]

Our ambition is to create a culture where there is effective, high quality learning provision, combined with meaningful and purposeful school partnerships, focused on the direct pursuit of improved outcomes for all Walsall's young people. Our council-wide transformation programme is a whole system transformation of services associated with children who are looked after, as a key corporate transformation. We intend to better align schools with other providers and services impacting positively on the lives of our children.

Our transformation programme commits us to:

- Whole system change to ensure that Walsall's **Children's Services are as efficient and as effective** as they can be

- ensuring that support is in place so children can have the best start and are **safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well**

- ensuring that our communities are resilient and that housing needs for children and young people are met in in **safe and healthy places that build a strong sense of belonging and cohesion**

- creating a **robust and ambitious school led system** of continuous improvement, informed by intelligent use of relevant data, and building on the many existing strong networks amongst Walsall schools and school leadership

- ensuring every school is part of a **family of schools**, and that there is good local and borough-wide knowledge

- developing **partnerships with employers, universities and health** to ensure Walsall's children, young people and families receive the qualifications and skills they need to become active, independent, contributing and positive citizens

- ensuring **high challenge and support based on a restorative approach** at all levels

- learning from and sharing the best **national and international developments in education and social care**

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[1] Corporate Plan, 2018-2021, Walsall Council

- above all Walsall Council will ensure that no **child, young person, family, school or academy, Head teacher or Principal, governing body or community** feels unsafe or unsupported in this continuing journey of all our schools being fully inclusive

Sally Rowe
Executive Director of Children's Services

Contents

Introduction

Our **Walsall Right for Children** vision sets out our ambition of the broad view of the role of schools in their immediate community, in Walsall as a whole and beyond and with the aim to meet the needs of the whole child. That is:

Our core work for **Walsall Right for Children** is based on our needs assessment which identified; 'what's working', innovation activity and learning across children's services nationally.

Our **key principles** within our vision are:

- Listening and responding to the voices of our children
- Restororative practice … doing with, not for or to
- Focussing on making a difference

Our **key priorities** within our vision are:

- Locality working
- Quality of practice and support
- Improve achievement and close the gaps
- Develop a strong and stable workforce
- Review our commissioning approach

Consequently, Walsall Council also works with a wide range of partners to champion physical and mental well-being and to ensure that communities work collectively to support schools and our children and young people in their wider civic role. Walsall Council is committed to ensuring that children have the best start in life and are safe from harm, happy and learning well.

In the Local Authority's Children's Services Directorate, the Access and Achievement service will deliver the Walsall Right for Children vision through two distinct strategies:

- The Access Strategy
- The Inclusion Strategy

This, our Walsall Right for Children Inclusion Strategy sets out the vision, priorities and aims to ensure a step change in improved outcomes for all children and young people. The strategy also aligns with the Council's corporate plan 2018-2021[2] and its priorities:

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[2] Walsall Council Corporate Plan 2018-2021

> *'Children have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.'*

Ref	Outcomes	Measures	
Ch1	Children will be ready for school	25	Percentage of pupils reaching a good level of development (GLD) at the end of reception
Ch2	The gaps in educational attainment between the least and most deprived communities will be narrowed and for all under achieving groups	26	The progress Free School Meals children make
Ch3	Right children looked after, for the right length of time in the right placement	27	Average length of time in care
Ch4	Care leavers are economically active citizens of their community	28	Percentage of care leavers not in education employment or training (NEETs)
Ch5	Young People are prevented from entering the criminal justice system	29	Reduction of first time entrants

Our strategic priorities are based on an assumption that, given the right environment, culture, approach and circumstances all our children and young people can thrive, flourish and achieve great outcomes.

This Walsall Right for Children Inclusion Strategy aims to set out the respective roles and responsibilities of all concerned with educational outcomes including the Local Authority, which will act:

a) As a **champion** - of educational transformation with a strong moral purpose and democratic mandate to ensure good outcomes and a shared vision for our children, families and communities.

b) As a **convener** – bringing leaders together, connecting to best practice within and

beyond the system and facilitating the best partnerships.

c) As a **commissioner** – bringing the strategic picture, sharing intelligence and data and enabling and commissioning support, challenge and development.
As a Local Authority, we believe that it is our duty to ensure that our values support children, young people and their families. Our values are:

Professionalism As stewards of public funds and information, we understand the importance of our jobs, we have respect for ourselves, our colleagues, our citizens and the organisation that we represent. We act accordingly. We deal with issues, whether positive or negative, in a moderate and straightforward manner whenever possible.

Leadership Together we will create an inspiring vision of the future. We will motivate and inspire people to engage with that vision. We recognise the talents of individuals and allow those talents to be utilised for the betterment of the organisation.

Accountability We adhere to a standard of professionalism in the workplace. We hold ourselves responsible for upholding the purpose of our organisation.

Transparency We will ensure the availability of information, which can be made public.

Ethical We will display integrity, honesty and be mindful of the rule of law in order to successfully practice and promote transparency of government.

Our Vision

Walsall Right for Children's vision for inclusion is one where potential is unlocked for all learners whatever their abilities and needs. In schools and settings where creatively and an open restorative culture helps gain the necessary skills and confidence to be inspired and be aspirational.

Systemic improvement across Walsall is required to achieve this, and we put forward a vision for reforming practice built on four key pillars and identified in the recent education review conducted by Edward Timpson[3]

Walsall Schools

| Ambitious leadership: setting high expectations for every child | Equipping: giving schools the skills and capacity to deliver | Incentivising: creating the best conditions for every child | Safeguarding: ensuring no child misses out on education |
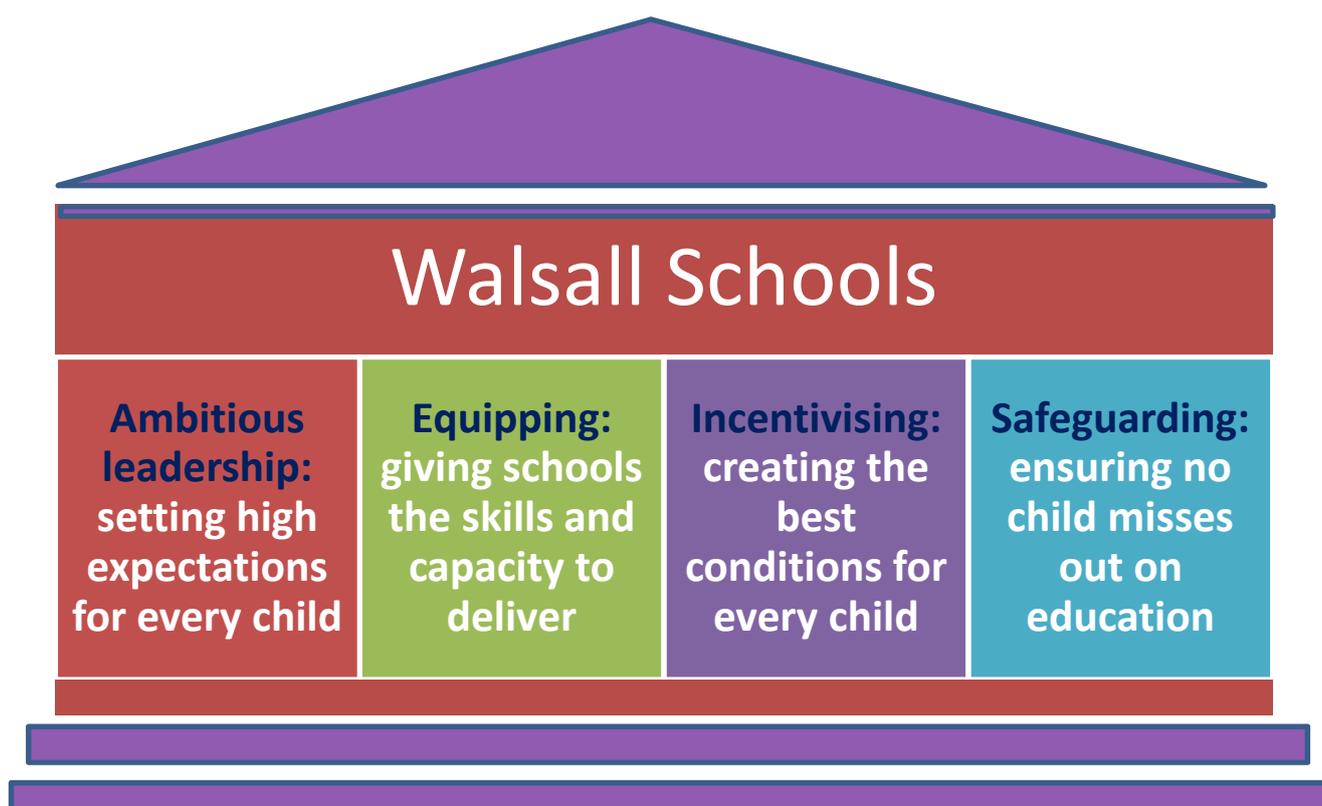
Ambitious Leadership:
We believe that we must support school leaders to create strong school cultures that deliver the best outcomes for every child. To do this, we need ensure schools have the support and capability to set clear and high expectations for all children, as well as to put in place the support that individual children may need. It is vital that we ensure that we have the right school leaders who are positive role models for all children in every Walsall school.

Equipping:
We believe that if we are to support schools to deliver effectively high standards for every child, we must invest in their skills and capability to identify needs, address and issues and offer the very best education available.

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[3] Timpson Review of School Exclusion, May 2019

Incentivising:
We believe that we need to recognize schools who succeed in supporting all children, including those with additional needs, to remain positively engaged in mainstream in the context of a well-managed school. Sharing good practice of these schools where they take positive action to create cultures that offer the best conditions for all children to learn.

Safeguarding:
We believe that as well as raising the expectations of schools and giving them the right skills and support to meet the expectations. Any high-performing system should have the right safeguards to keep children safe and ensure they are receiving a suitable education.

Policy into Practice:
We believe that schools across Walsall should use Quality First Teaching principles. These provide high quality experiences and opportunities using flexible and adaptable approaches in learning environments where everyone is allowed to flourish. QFT, alongside a timely graduated approach to SEN in accordance with the SEN Code of Practice (2014) will ensure all our learners have a voice and are supported throughout their educational journey, building resilient citizens and communities who feel valued and positive about their future.

'Quality first teaching draws on a repertoire of teaching strategies and techniques that are closely matched to the specified learning objectives and the particular needs of the children and young people in the class. It demands 100% participation from the pupils and sets high and realistic challenges. It does not "spoon feed", it is challenging and demanding; it expects pupils to be able to articulate their ideas, understanding and thinking by actively promoting pupil talk.'

Quality First Teaching Principles:
- QFT involves understanding the needs of the learners.
- A variety of methods of delivery of approaches will help engage and inform learners.
- Support staff must have a clear understanding of what the lesson will involve so they can play an effective role.
- It is essential to monitor the lesson to gain a clear understanding of how learners are progressing.
- Questioning learners helps to challenge them and to check their understanding.

As a Local Authority we will model a restorative approach based on equality, respect, high challenge and high support to ensure we are the 'champions' of our children, and their families. We will do this in line with our statutory duties whilst ensuring that all learners have equal access to a rich and vibrant curriculum in and out of the classroom.
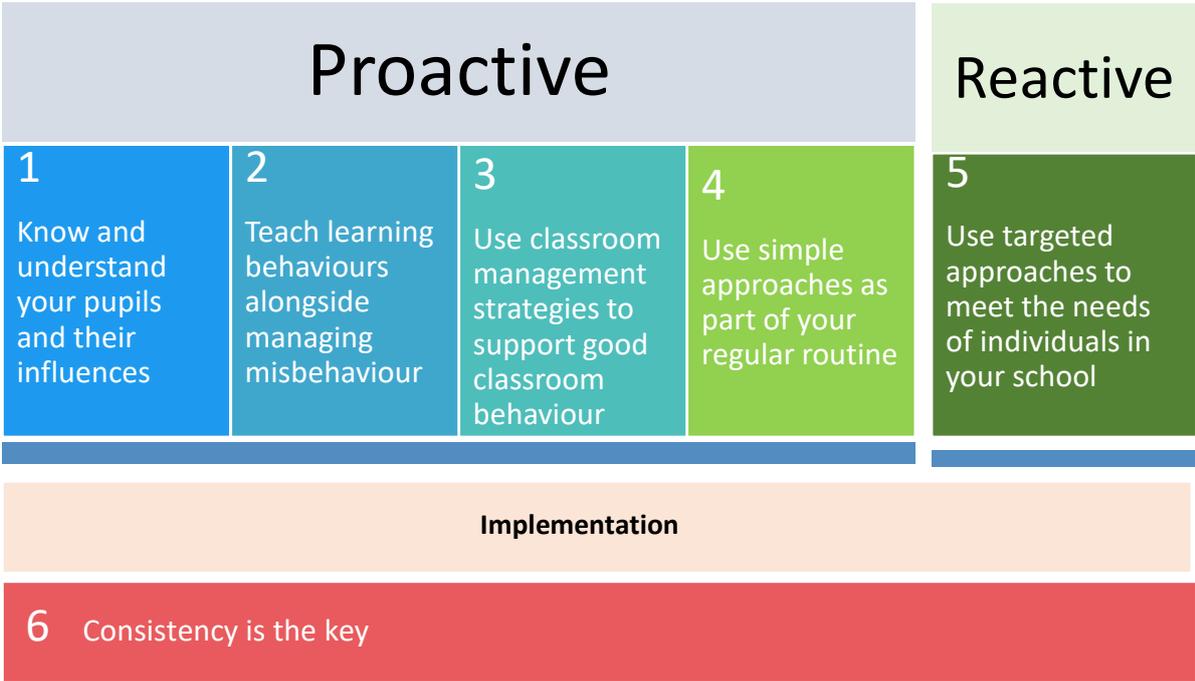
Inclusive Schools, Behaviour and Exclusions:
We will require and challenge our school leaders to promote good behaviour, positive relationships, resilience, emotional well-being and engagement in learning to ensure

that successful outcomes for all Walsall children and young people are the norm. Research over time has found that the consistent features of school that effectively promoted positive behaviour were[4]

- **School culture and ethos.** The 'leadership processes which develop, maintain and transform the culture,' specifying 'an emphasis on developing values, norms and behaviour.'
- **Community and partnerships.** Schools must see themselves as members of a greater community.
- **Personal and professional characteristics.** An emphasis on what type of leader or leadership is frequently associated with good behaviour practices.
- **Promoting inclusion and limiting exclusion.** These schools tended to make maximum efforts to retain the most challenging students by finding methods of including them[5] in the school community. Note that this has often been misinterpreted – disastrously- as an oversimplification approach that returns students to the classroom with no program in place to remedy their behaviour. The opposite should be true; the most challenging children need provision that is often not possible within the mainstream classroom, but can be provided more efficiently in nurture units, until ready to return to mainstream education.

The recent guidance from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF[6]) sets out a number of key recommendations, which we ask Walsall schools to follow.

Proactive				Reactive
1 Know and understand your pupils and their influences	**2** Teach learning behaviours alongside managing misbehaviour	**3** Use classroom management strategies to support good classroom behaviour	**4** Use simple approaches as part of your regular routine	**5** Use targeted approaches to meet the needs of individuals in your school

Implementation

6 Consistency is the key

The first details strategies to prevent misbehaviour happening. A key theme from these recommendations is the importance of knowing individual pupils well, so that schools

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[4] Promoting the conditions for positive behaviour, to help every child succeed – review of the landscape (2011) Professor Philip Garner

[5] Creating a culture: How school leaders can optimise behaviour, Tom Bennett - March 2017

[6] Improving Behaviour in Schools – Education Endowment Foundation, June 2019

and teachers know which factors might affect pupil behaviour and what the school can do to address these. Focusing on developing good relationships also ensures pupils feel valued and supported, meaning they are less likely to misbehave. The second focuses on how to deal with bad behaviour when it happens. A key message is that schools should use personalised approaches—like daily report cards—to address 'problem pupils', rather than universal systems. It recommends that teachers are trained in specific strategies if they're dealing with pupils with high behaviour needs. The third focuses on the importance of consistency and coherence when it comes to behaviour policies. This means that once senior leaders have considered the rationale for putting a new behaviour strategy or approach to work, they need to spend time and care embedding it across the entire school.

The guidance provided by the EEF supports the key principles highlighted Timpson review of school exclusions and these are:

- every child, regardless of their characteristics, needs or the type of school they attend, deserves a high-quality education that allows them to flourish and paves the way to a successful future
- we should expect schools consistently to have the right systems in place and teachers to have the right skills to manage poor behaviour and provide support where children need it – but we must equip them with the right tools, capability and capacity to deliver against this expectation
- schools must be calm and safe environments and it is right that we support head teachers to establish strong school behaviour cultures, including by making use of exclusion where appropriate
- there is no optimum rate or number of exclusions – exclusion rates must be considered in the context in which the decisions to exclude are made. A higher rate of exclusion may reflect local context and be a sign of effective leadership in one school, whilst in others a lower exclusion rate may signal strong early intervention strategies that have been put in place. In contrast, higher rates of exclusion could demonstrate schools not putting in place effective interventions for children at risk of exclusion, and indeed lower rates could be indicative of children being pushed out of school without the proper processes being followed
- alongside considering the best interests of the wider school community, head teachers, with the support of their staff, should make decisions about how to address poor behaviour, based on their knowledge of individual children and what specific support, interventions or sanctions are needed
- schools must be places that are welcoming and respectful, where every child has the opportunity to succeed. To ensure this is the case, they should understand how their policies impact differently on pupils depending on their protected characteristics, such as disability or race, and should give particular consideration to the fair treatment of pupils from groups who are vulnerable to exclusion
- it cannot be the job of schools alone to take action to understand and address the complex underlying needs that children may have
- we should not accept that exclusion comes at the cost of a child getting a good education

Good behaviour – even exemplary behaviour – is possible in every school setting, whatever the baseline. This must always be the aspiration, no matter how far the execution falls short at times, because without the aspiration, the goal can never be realised. This includes schools with the most challenging intakes as well as the least.

A student's experience in school remains one of the most insightful indicators of later life success in any one of a number of metrics. For many it is the best chance they will ever have to flourish. How they conduct themselves at school is crucial to that experience. Helping them develop good behaviour is therefore one of the most important tasks a school faces.

Inclusion in Walsall is everyone's right and everyone's responsibility

The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members.

National Context

The significant shift in national education policy and funding which has occurred over the past five plus years has resulted in increased autonomy and diversity of school provision. However, is important to recognize that Ofsted still have the oversight for all schools and make judgements about schools performance based on the inspection framework. From the 1st of September 2019, there is a new Ofsted inspection framework[7]. Ofsted announced that:

"These changes will move Ofsted's focus away from headline data to look instead at how schools are achieving these results, and whether they are offering a curriculum that is broad, rich and deep, or simply rich and deep, or simply teaching to the test." (Ofsted press release)

Ofsted inspectors will now spend less time looking at exam results and test data, and more time considering how a nursery, school, college or other education provider has achieved their results. Ofsted grades will also stay the same: Outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate. However, how these grades will be decided upon has changed significantly. The judgement categories have been revised to now cover:

Quality of Education: This judgement will have a much clearer focus on the curriculum. There will also be three major components when judging the curriculum:

- intent (what you are trying to achieve through the curriculum - it must be broad and balanced and include the essential knowledge that pupils need to become educated citizens. Note: Ofsted does not describe what the curriculum should be and schools taking a radically different approach but coherent and research led approach will not be penalised)
- implementation (how the curriculum being delivered)
- impact (what difference is the curriculum making – but note this does not imply continuous testing to prove changes) There will be far less emphasis on school's internal data as evidence, and much greater emphasis on drawing together evidence from interviews, observations and documentary review, as well as nationally published information about how pupils progress when they leave school (secondary)

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[7] Ofsted Framework – May 2019

Behaviour and Attitudes: Behaviour and attitudes considers how leaders and staff create a safe, orderly and positive environment in the school and the impact this has on the behaviour and attitudes of the pupils.

Note: if there is evidence that a school has deliberately removed pupils on the day of the inspection then this is likely to result in inadequate judgement in both 'Behaviour and Attitudes' and 'Leadership and Management'. Ofsted will also evaluate the effectiveness of alternative and off-site arrangements made for pupils. In gathering evidence for this judgement, Ofsted will hold discussions with pupils and staff – this will include support staff and other systems – trainees, NQTs, administrative support staff, supply staff and catering staff.

Personal Development: There is a strong emphasis upon the academic, technical or vocational curriculum and Ofsted recognises that schools have a fundamental role in developing responsible, respectful and active citizens. Some of these activities will go beyond the normal school day and include a range of out of school activities. This judgement will include issues such as keeping healthy through diet and physical activity. It will also evaluate the school's provision for spiritual, moral and social education.

Leadership and Management: Leadership and management can be neatly summed up by, 'making things work'. This judgement is about how leaders, managers and those responsible for governance ensure that the education provided by the school has a positive impact on all its pupils including:

- creating a coherent vision through inclusive curriculum
- enabling staff to deliver that vision by supporting them to develop their skills
- developing an appropriate management style
- creating appropriate systems to enable the vision
- ensuring the delivery of the vision

What do the changes mean for children and young people with SEND? Many parents of disabled children and children with SEND have voiced concern over the new 2019 framework, saying that it lets vulnerable learners down and that inclusion has not been given enough focus. In response to this, Ofsted argues that the new framework will 'bear in mind where the curriculum needs to be amended to meet the needs of those learners with SEND' including:

- whether schools and early years providers are inclusive of children with SEND
- whether schools are removing some children from their rolls solely to improve published outcomes
- whether colleges and other further education providers are doing all they can to ensure that all learners are able to complete their courses
- whether the curriculum available for the most disadvantaged learners is ambitious and meets their needs

As a Local Authority we have taken much of our vision for inclusion from the new Ofsted framework and the Timpson review. We have also considered:

- the parliamentary report- *Forgotten Children: alternative provision and the scandal of ever-increasing exclusions*,[8] which states: "Mainstream schools should be bastions of inclusion".
- The white paper, *Education Excellence Everywhere*,[9] which calls for schools to: "deliver educational excellence everywhere, so that every child and young person can access world class provision, achieving to the best of his or her ability regardless of location, prior attainment and background".
- *Creating opportunity for all*,[10] a DfE publication, which states: "Every child, no matter their background, needs or where they live, deserves an excellent education and the opportunity to fulfil their potential. For some children, their health needs or circumstances mean that they are not able to attend a mainstream or special school, and are educated in alternative provision (AP). It is vital that we ensure that these children, who are often some of the most disadvantaged, are offered equal opportunities to make the most of their talents and become successful adults."

At the same time, Local Authorities have become strategic commissioners and champions for parents and children. Local Authorities retain the statutory duty "to promote high standards so that children and young people achieve well and fulfil their potential" (1996 Education Act) and are required to ensure secure arrangements for school improvement. School improvement in its widest sense, relating to:

- Alternative Provision
- Early Years and School Readiness
- Exclusions
- Leadership and Governance
- Policy support and good practice
- Post 16
- Schools Causing Concern
- SEND support and early intervention, including EHCP assessment and SENDAS
- Virtual School and LAC

As a Local Authority we are committed to providing an appropriate, high quality, inclusive education to ensure the best possible outcomes for all our pupils, whatever their abilities or needs.
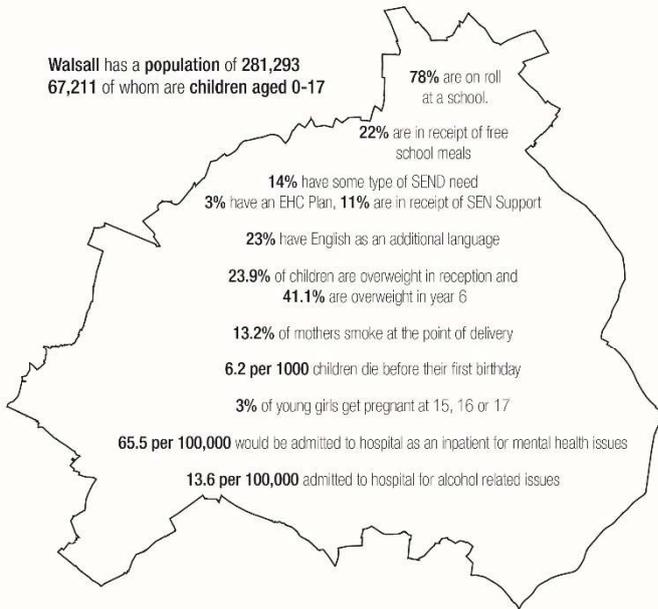
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[8] Forgotten Children: alternative provision and the scandal of ever-increasing exclusions. House of Commons Education Committee, July 2018

[9] Education Excellence Everywhere – White Paper, March 2016

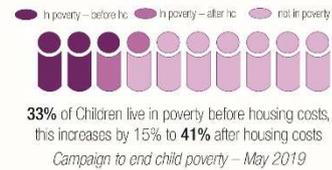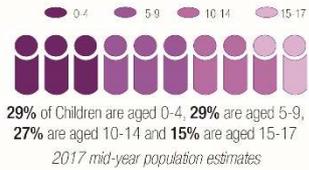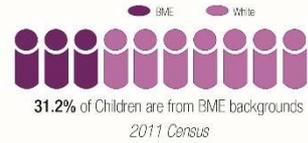[10] Creating opportunity for all Our vision for alternative provision. DfE March 2018
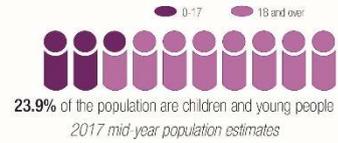
Local Context

Children Living in Walsall

Walsall has a **population** of 281,293 67,211 of whom are **children aged 0-17**

78% are on roll at a school.

22% are in receipt of free school meals

14% have some type of SEND need **3%** have an EHC Plan, **11%** are in receipt of SEN Support

23% have English as an additional language

23.9% of children are overweight in reception and **41.1%** are overweight in year 6

13.2% of mothers smoke at the point of delivery

6.2 per 1000 children die before their first birthday

3% of young girls get pregnant at 15, 16 or 17

65.5 per 100,000 would be admitted to hospital as an inpatient for mental health issues

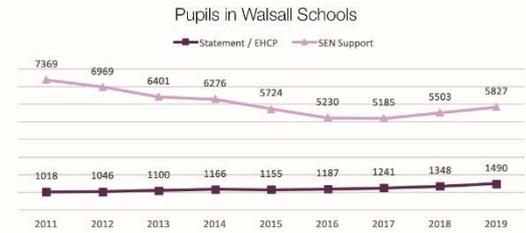**13.6 per 100,000** admitted to hospital for alcohol related issues

Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database rights 2017 [100019529]
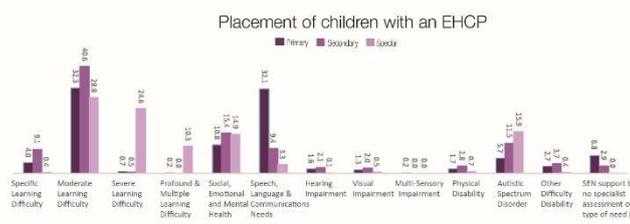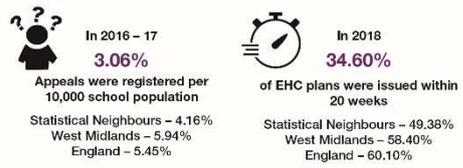
Walsall Council

23.9% of the population are children and young people
2017 mid-year population estimates

31.2% of Children are from BME backgrounds
2011 Census

29% of Children are aged 0-4, **29%** are aged 5-9, **27%** are aged 10-14 and **15%** are aged 15-17
2017 mid-year population estimates

33% of Children live in poverty before housing costs, this increases by 15% to **41%** after housing costs
Campaign to end child poverty – May 2019

Brief Profile of children with SEN in Walsall
Based on published data

EHC Plans and statements Maintained by Walsall

Placement of children with an EHCP

In 2016 – 17
3.06%
Appeals were registered per 10,000 school population
Statistical Neighbours – 4.16%
West Midlands – 5.94%
England – 5.45%

In 2018
34.60%
of EHC plans were issued within 20 weeks
Statistical Neighbours – 49.38%
West Midlands – 58.40%
England – 60.10%

Pupils in Walsall Schools

In January 2019, Walsall schools reported that

1490 (2.8%) pupils
Had an Education, Care and Health plan
Statistical Neighbours – 3.26%
West Midlands – 3.10%
England – 3.10%

5827 (10.9%) pupils
Were in receipt of SEN Support
Statistical Neighbours – 12.75%
West Midlands – 12.60%
England – 11.90%

Placement of children with an EHCP

Walsall Council

We aim to engender a sense of community and belonging and to raise the aspirations and expectations for all pupils' especially vulnerable learners and those with special education needs and disabilities (SEND). We believe that all children should be equally valued wherever they access their education. We will strive to eliminate prejudice and discrimination, and to develop an environment where all children can achieve, feel safe and included.

Our moral imperative is that fairness and social justice is fundamental to ensuring progress for all, but especially for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable learners who start behind others.

"Accountability matters - every child deserves a great education. We have a responsibility to ensure all pupils are getting a great education, and we will be unapologetic in acting where pupils' education is suffering." DfE – 'Principles for a clear and simple accountability system' (May 2018)

"It's time to raise our ambitions, to expect more and to expect better for every child, whatever their background." Education Secretary Damian Hinds (July 2018).

A Partnership Approach

The Local Authority is ultimately accountable for the statutory education outcomes of all its children and young people, but recognises that many of the skills and resources to achieve great outcomes lie within schools and across partnerships.

Central to our Walsall Right 4 Children Inclusion Strategy is the strong belief that schools are, for the most part, self-improving. We recognise of the value and importance of system leadership in promoting inclusion and school improvement. Teaching School Alliances and hubs along with other strong schools with capacity, are taking an increasing role in developing system leaders and sharing good practice. These schools embrace the concept of school-to-school support and take responsibility beyond their own organisations.
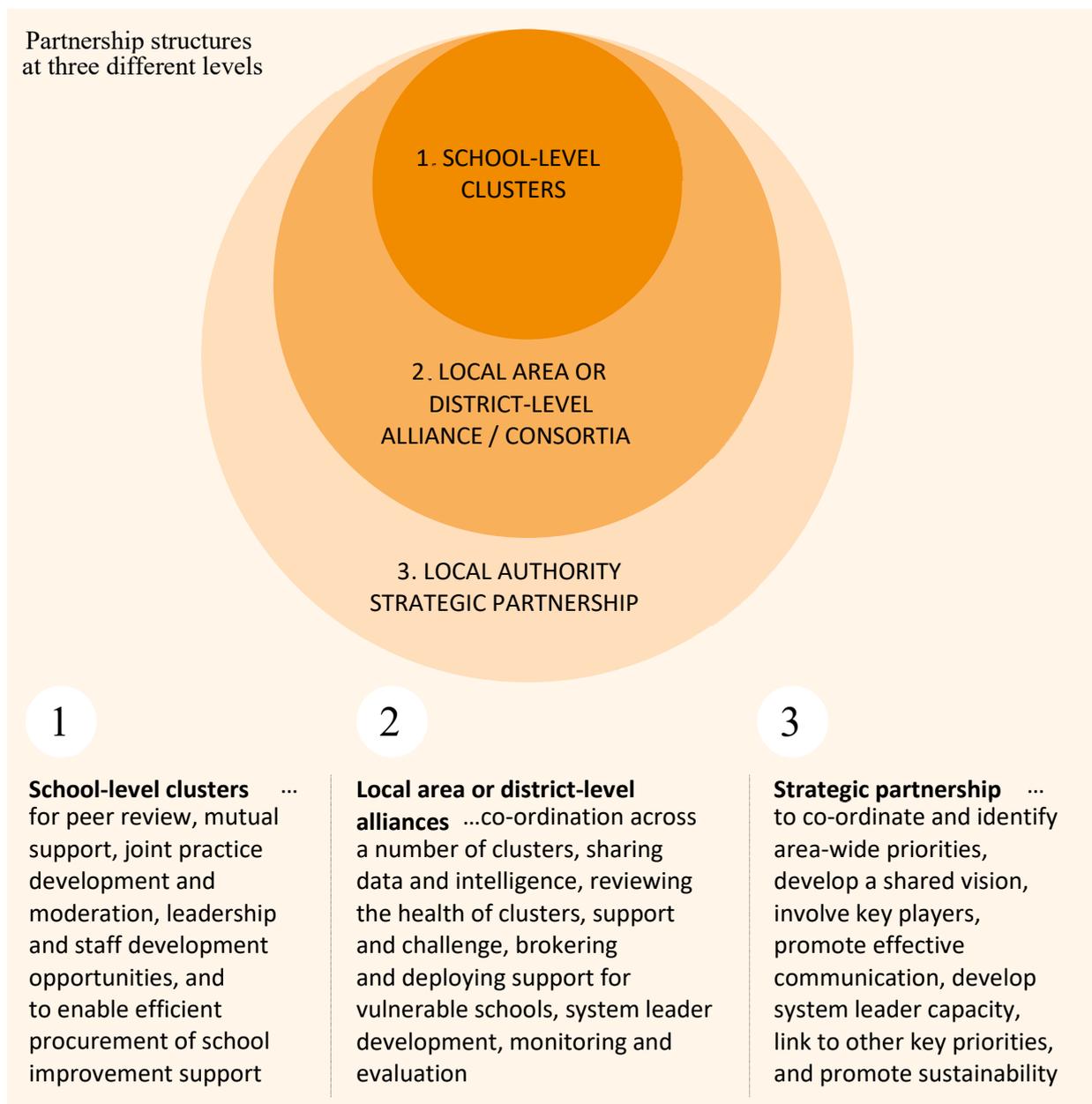
The Council provides support and challenge to schools to improve outcomes for all children and young people across the borough by:

➢ Using the LA's Education Data Dashboard (EDD) to identify schools that *may* require support, *may* need to be challenged as well as those that are known to require support and challenge. This is part of our protocol for schools causing concern.[11]
➢ Commissioning, where appropriate support and challenge that ensures schools remain 'good and better' and that improvement is sustained.
➢ Intervening early where the performance of a school is declining – ensuring that schools are challenged and secure the support needed to improve to at least 'good'.
➢ Knowing our schools well and influencing schools to become engaged in service design, commissioning and delivery at the local level.
➢ Targeting school priority areas for improvement and signposting/brokering where schools can access appropriate support.
➢ Encouraging good and outstanding schools to support and challenge other schools and contribute to system improvement.
➢ Building strong working relationships with Head Teachers – encouraging challenge and support.
➢ Work with partners to develop flexible and responsive locality based services to support children and their families to be' school ready' in Early Years.
➢ Exploring regional links for sharing good practice and driving up collective performance across the Midlands.
➢ Piloting social workers being based in schools which will enhance our principles of connecting our practitioners with the communities in which children and young people live
➢ Working with parents and pupils in a culture of openness and honesty

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[11] Schools Causing Concern. Protocol for Monitoring, Challenge, Support & intervention in Schools. Walsall Council 2018.

Partnership structures at three different levels[12]

We believe that as a Local Authority we need to work with our schools and partners to develop a multi-tiered structure that will work within our local context ensuring that the local improvement system provides high-quality support and is credible with school leaders. This will mean that we will need to have a robust commissioning process that operates through these partnerships and can work through the complexities of multiple providers in a mixed economy.

Partnership structures
at three different levels

1. SCHOOL-LEVEL CLUSTERS

2. LOCAL AREA OR DISTRICT-LEVEL ALLIANCE / CONSORTIA

3. LOCAL AUTHORITY STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

1

School-level clusters … for peer review, mutual support, joint practice development and moderation, leadership and staff development opportunities, and to enable efficient procurement of school improvement support

2

Local area or district-level alliances …co-ordination across a number of clusters, sharing data and intelligence, reviewing the health of clusters, support and challenge, brokering and deploying support for vulnerable schools, system leader development, monitoring and evaluation

3

Strategic partnership … to co-ordinate and identify area-wide priorities, develop a shared vision, involve key players, promote effective communication, develop system leader capacity, link to other key priorities, and promote sustainability

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[12] Enabling School Improvement – research into the role of local authorities in supporting local school improvement systems. ISOS Partnership & LGA – January 2018

School-level Clusters:
All schools and academies are part of an identified Walsall cluster of schools. There are a range of improvement benefits that are found from working together including staff development opportunities, joint commissioning professional development or even short-term secondments working with other schools.

Through cluster working school leaders can provide much in the way of informal mutual support, as well as planning more formal leadership development. Cluster projects both short and long-term enable joint working, moderation of practice and performance, and genuine joint practice development. School-level clusters are driven by school leaders. The Local Authority see their responsibilities as championing and as conveners of inclusion, leadership and school development across the school-level cluster.

Locality-Level:
Walsall Children's Services are moving towards locality working. This way of working enables focused and targeted support for priorities, which are specific to the children and families, and supports schools in their locality. Locality working facilitates co-production with schools based on identified needs through data and local intelligence.

The Local Authority will bring the intelligence from across the local school improvement system, utilizing existing expertise and capacity from within Walsall and beyond, to support priority working and support the evaluation process. Much of the work at locality level will involve the Local Authority in partnership with Teaching School Alliances, health and other identified good practice providers.

Walsall Right 4 Children Strategic Inclusion Partnership:
The family of schools in Walsall is strong. The creation of the Walsall Right for Children Strategic Education Inclusion Board[13] by the Local Authority in partnership with its schools; embodies a shared moral purpose and passion for inclusion and for continuous improvement in outcomes for all children and young people.

The new Strategic Education Inclusion Board has been established to replace both the Education Challenge Board and the SENDi Board and led by Head teachers and Chairs of Governors. The Board is funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant via the Schools Forum and is supported by the Local Authority to develop a school led system for Walsall. The Walsall Right 4 Children Strategic Education Inclusion Board has three sub groups:

1. Primary Strategy Group
2. Secondary Strategy Group
3. Post 16 Strategy Group

The Local Authority has an important role in working with the Strategic Inclusion Partnership to identify key priorities, which are borough wide. This will impact on all service areas across the Council and not just in the education service delivery areas so that inclusion and school improvement are not seen in isolation.

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[13] Walsall Right for Children Strategic Education Inclusion Board – ToR 2019

Priorities for Improvement

The Strategic Walsall Right 4 Children Education & Inclusion Board has identified the following themes for each of its working groups:

- ➢ SEND
- ➢ Recruitment and Retention
- ➢ Vulnerable Learners
- ➢ Transition
- ➢ Standards

Specific aims for 20019-20 are:

SEND:
- Ensure all schools make appropriate 'reasonable adjustments' (Equality Act, 2010) for children with barriers to learning, including children with medical needs

- Ensure early identification of SEND needs, through implementation of robust school based monitoring systems and 'assess, plan, do, review' cycles

- Ensure all schools provide a graduated approach to SEND in accordance with the SEN Code of Practice (2014), to ensure timely and needs led support with a focus on promoting independence and inclusion

- Develop confidence and effectiveness across Walsall schools in providing appropriate and evidence based support for children with SEMH needs

- Effective use of SEN budgets and resources across Walsall schools, with the commissioning and implementation of interventions closely matched to current needs

- Development of clear and transparent pathways and a partnership approach to support so that schools and families know what services can provide and how to access specialist support when needed

- Schools and services work in partnership with children and their families to ensure a needs led approach to service design and delivery

- Improved educational outcomes for children on SEN support

- Improved educational outcomes for children with an EHCP

- Improve access and achievement of the SEND pupils

- Develop a universal understanding of 'nurture' and how to develop and deliver a culture and approach to nurture across all schools and settings utilising the experience and expertise across schools and across Children's Services.

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION:

- Teacher Supply and Recruitment. The Strategic Education and Inclusion Board approved 2 year funding October 2018 towards the development of a Walsall NQT Development Programme. The programme has four strategy priorities:

  - We will help to create the right climate for head teachers and other school leaders to establish supportive school cultures. At the heart of this will be reforming the accountability system.

  - We will transform support for early career teachers, introducing the most significant reform to teaching since it became a graduate only profession backed by substantial extra investment. In particular:

  - We will build on the foundation of the Early Career Framework to support teachers – whatever their expertise or circumstances – to pursue the right career opportunities for them. In particular:

  - We will radically simplify the process for becoming a teacher, introducing new digital systems designed to make application much easier and more user-friendly.

- Focus on establishing good behaviour across all schools as the key to ensuring that all children are able to achieve their full potential. Effective leadership of schools in establishing the right environment, culture and conditions for learning will support and enable all school staff to work in environments where they can thrive and develop their skills. Universal training/CPD event for all HTs by phase on the EEF guidance materials.

VULNERABLE LEARNERS:

- Improve access and achievement of the vulnerable and disadvantaged learners. Every school has pupils premium funding which is given to them to 'raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils of all abilities and to close the gaps between them and their peers' (DfE and EFA, 2018). However the most recent research conducted by the Education Policy Institute (July 2018), shows that the gap for our disadvantaged pupils here in Walsall is unacceptably wide when compared to their peers.

  - On average, disadvantaged children are four months behind at age five. Here in Walsall disadvantaged pupils are 5.9 months behind at aged five.
  - Nationally disadvantaged pupils at aged 11 are likely to be 10 months behind their peers. Here in Walsall that gap is 12.3 months – over a year behind.
  - Nationally at the age of 16 and by the time they take their GCSEs they are 19 months behind. Here in Walsall, that gap is nearly 2 years behind their peers and an unacceptable 23.6 months.

- Reduce the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions. Attendance and behaviour within our schools is a key priority area. Walsall exclusion rate is currently 3 times the national average. Briefings on the Timpson Review for all HTs and Walsall protocol.

- Develop and encourage a Restorative Justice approach enabling all learners to remain within their school setting.

- Develop and encourage a whole-school approach to mental health based on the DfE guidelines.

- Review the use of Pupil Premium funding and carefully measure the impact of the strategies to ensure maximum impact on the support for vulnerable learners.

- Introduce the **Raising Attainment of Disadvantaged Youngsters (RADY)** concept within secondary schools. Fund the initial concept work and encourage all secondary schools across Walsall to become active partners in the RADY networking activities

- Fund the **Poverty Proofing the School Day** project for all secondary schools. Poverty Proofing the School Day is a project developed by Children North East. The project provides a toolkit to poverty proof the school day, to reduce stigma and remove barriers to learning and to assist schools in exploring the most effective way to spend pupil premium allocation. Poverty Proofing the School Day consists of an audit for each individual school, questioning pupils, staff, parents and governors. The result is an action plan tailored to each individual school to address any stigmatising policies or practices. There is then the opportunity to be awarded an accreditation following a review visit. Training for staff and governors on poverty and its impact on education.

- Review of Alternative Provision across the Borough aligned to the Government's vision[14] for reform to ensure:
  - The right children are placed in AP. We need commissioners who place children in AP for behavioural, health or other reasons to plan for how the placement will meet the child's needs and support their transition into a mainstream or special school, another medical placement or onto meaningful employment, education or training at 16. Wherever possible, this planning and decision-making will involve parents and children.
  - Children have good experiences of, and receive high quality education in AP. AP providers should provide an ambitious education that meets children's needs and prepares them for success in the next phase of their education.
  - Children achieve meaningful outcomes after leaving AP. The success of AP settings can be measured by how well prepared children are for the next stage of their lives. Schools, the LA, AP settings, NHS teams, post-16 providers and employers work together to ensure the routes out of AP are well-developed, so that children who leave AP settings can fulfil their potential as they grow up.
  - AP is recognised as an integral part of the education system. AP should be an attractive place for teachers to train, work and develop. There must be sufficient high quality and specialist provision to meet the needs of compulsory school-age children, for as long as they need it.
  - The system is designed to achieve high quality outcomes for children and value for money for the taxpayer. AP should be delivered on the basis of a robust evidence base about how commissioning, accountability and inspection arrangements support the delivery of better, long-term outcomes for children and value for money for the taxpayer.

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[14] Creating opportunity for all. Our vision for alternative provision. DfE March 2018

- Commit to the What Works Change program. Walsall has been chosen to be one of 21 pioneer partners in Wave 1 to work with the What Works Centre for social care. The centre, funded by the DfE provides a whole organisational offer to Children's Services bringing additional capacity and expertise to accelerate our transformation work. Placing our social workers directly within schools to:

  – Reduce the need for higher levels of statutory social work involvement
  – Reduce the need for care entry
  – Deal more swiftly with concerns about children
  – More cost effective services, reducing the demand for children's social care
  – More effective use of school's early help services for children and families

TRANSITION:
- Review all transition arrangements into EYFS to ensure all learners' needs are known (where possible) and that parents are encourage to play an active role in their child's education.

- Review all transition arrangements from Primary to Secondary schools for all vulnerable learners targeting the disadvantaged pupils whose 'flight path' will be a barrier to the gaps for these learners to be closed.

- Review all Transition Panels and groups alongside the development of the All-age Disability Service to ensure a single transitions pathway for all young people with SEND from 14-25. Ensure appropriate transitions pathways are developed for those with particular needs e.g. Autism.

STANDARDS:
1) Early Years Performance

- Roll out of the 'Language First' project in partnership with Dudley, Sandwell and Wolverhampton Local Authorities, aiming to further improve children's 'school ready' outcomes by the age of five. This is an important project, which links closely to the research findings that show that a good number of children start school struggling to communicate and to speak in full sentences. This lack of communication skills is separate to those children for who English is an additional language.

- Improve the number of EYFS settings attaining a good level of development compared to national as currently 51 settings out of 77 settings are below national.

- Ensure that all learners and parents have access to an inclusive EYFS setting

2) Primary Phase Performance

- The KS2 data identifies that reading is a key priority area as 43 of our 77 Junior/Primary **schools** end of 2018-19 reading results were below the national standard.

- The KS2 data identifies that mathematics is a key priority area as 36 of our 77 Junior/Primary schools end of 2018-19 mathematics results were below the national standard and the three-year trend shows the gap is closing.

3) Secondary Phase Performance

- The KS3 and KS4 data identifies concerns re the outcomes and performance of disadvantaged pupils particularly White British pupils, in comparison to all pupils nationally. At the age of 16 yrs old Walsall disadvantaged pupils are 23.6 months behind their peers nationally.

- KS5 data indicates…

4) Post 16 Performance

- Mapping current provision and identifying gaps and alignment to economic priorities/ Labour Market Information (LMI)

- Identifying Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) hotspots such as wards and schools. Identifying 'what is not working well' and the underlying causes.

- Identification of good practice and what is working well and having impact.

- Close partnership working with Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) Impact project to support NEET Post 16.

- Partnership working to develop better and more timely transition pathways for young people with Education Health Care Plans (EHCP). Strengthening links between child and adult social care, health, SEND etc. and the associated education and training providers, in joint funding arrangements where appropriate.

- Refining and monitoring provision to ensure targets are met.

- Develop Post 16/18 provision to ensure that it meets specifics needs such as, Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

- Better monitoring and re-engagement of young people who drop out of education or are Not Knowns.

Roles and Responsibilities

We expect all schools to:

- ➢ Provide good or outstanding education

- ➢ Be inclusive and caring, keeping children safe - offering a school place to local children whatever their level of need or background and welcoming vulnerable children into their school community

- ➢ Set high aspirations for **all** children

- ➢ Develop an ethos that demonstrates good citizenship and respect for all, underpinned by appropriate strategies such as restorative justice principles for behaviour management, inclusive practice, mindfulness and coaching and mentoring for pupils and staff

- ➢ Promote and retain a high focus upon good and outstanding teaching

- ➢ Celebrate and reward success of their pupils and staff or the whole school and share such good news with the Local Authority and others to raise the profile of educational success and support the improvement of all Walsall schools

Parents have a central role in supporting and encouraging aspiration in their children. The majority of parents want their children to do well; the school systems need to ensure that parents are well supported to do this and made to feel welcome to discuss any concerns they may have.

In particular, parents should:

- ➢ Make sure their child attends school regularly and on time unless they are unwell

- ➢ Make sure their child is ready to learn

- ➢ Praise their child's success and encourage them to try again if they don't succeed first time

- ➢ Have high aspirations for their children and their school

- ➢ Encourage their children to reach their potential by taking an active interest in their school work and activities

- ➢ Build a relationship with the school and particularly the class teacher

- ➢ Respond positively and in a timely manner to requests from the school to assist their children to do better

- ➢ Ask their school for help and advice or to consider changing their approach if their school if they feel their child is at risk of not realising their potential

The Role of Head Teachers and School Leaders

School leaders are instrumental in providing the drive to improve standards in our schools and Head Teachers particularly play a crucial role and have a wealth of experience and knowledge to offer. There are a growing number of Executive Head Teachers who have responsibility for more than one school across a locality. Heads are accountable for the educational performance of the school, ensuring good or better outcomes for all pupils and to ensure that there isn't a gap between vulnerable groups and all our children. Along with the Governing Body, school leaders are responsible for their school's improvement and its inclusive nature.

Head Teachers should:

➢ Be relentless in their drive for improvement in access and achievement for all.

➢ Be relentless in their work in ensuring that all children and families are support to attend school regularly.

➢ Motivate staff and provide effective leadership with a strong focus upon a high standard of teaching and learning.

➢ Provide regular and rigorous performance management of teaching staff.

➢ Ensure that the school is fully inclusive enabling all learners whatever their starting points achieve their full potential by deploying the right well trained staff and good quality resources are made available.

➢ Be open to challenge and innovation.

➢ Where possible share their good practice and expertise in partnership with other schools, the LA and Teaching School Alliances.

The Role of the Governing Body

The effective leadership by the governing body is crucial to the strong performance and success of each school and this is closely scrutinised by Ofsted. Effective school governors make a positive contribution to children's learning and have a crucial role in raising standards. Whatever the designation of the school the responsibility is to develop, with the Head Teacher, a vision and strategic direction for the school, and holding the school to account for the outcomes of all learners.

They have to hold the school to account to ensure high educational performance is achieved by:

➢ Understanding the needs for all learners to have a fully inclusive education and ensuring that the school provides highly qualified, trained staff and is well resourced to support the learning needs of all.

➢ Carrying out the performance management of the Head Teacher.

➢ Monitoring progress to ensure that every pupil and specific groups in the school gets the best possible education.

➢ Ensuring the school is fully compliant with health and safety and safeguarding policy and good practice.

- ➢ Holding the school to account for efficient use of financial resources, delivering good value for money, ensuring good financial systems, protocols and practice, and complying with legal requirements.

Governors are expected to uphold the seven principles of public life:

- ▪ Selflessness
- ▪ Integrity
- ▪ Objectivity
- ▪ Accountability
- ▪ Openness
- ▪ Honesty
- ▪ Leadership

All governing bodies should be self-evaluating, access appropriate training and use the services of a professional clerk to ensure their working practices have the greatest positive impact on the school.

NLGs: There are two National Leaders of Governance in the borough. They are experienced chairs of Governors who offer support to chairs of governors in other schools. They concentrate on developing leadership capacity. They offer FREE support on a voluntary basis for up to a total of 10 days per financial year to one or more schools. They can be contacted directly or via Walsall's Governor Services department.

Teaching and Learning

Children's progress in their learning is dependent upon the high quality of teaching and learning that takes place in the classroom every day. Teachers therefore are fundamental to our overall success and are a valuable asset.

Teachers need to:

- ➢ Feel valued and supported in their school

- ➢ Aspire to provide high quality teaching for effective learning to happen

- ➢ Be open to challenge and innovation

- ➢ Take responsibility and accountability for the aspiration, attainment and outcomes of all their pupils

- ➢ Be supported and challenged to improve their performance.

- ➢ Be given opportunity to share good practice, their knowledge and skills both within their school and elsewhere.

- ➢ Be supported in accessing relevant and good quality training.

- ➢ Work to support and encourage all parents to work in partnership with the school in addressing the needs of their child and their child's education.

The Local Authority:

The Local Authority is responsible for:

- ➢ Understanding the data and context of all schools based on end of year results.

- ➢ Identifying the key priorities for inclusion and school improvement activity year on year, based on; hard data, hard and soft intelligence and an awareness of local and national developments

- ➢ Identifying those schools who are Schools Causing Concern (whether they are in an Ofsted category or not) and identifying appropriate resource to support and challenge rapid improvement towards a secure judgement of good.

- ➢ Working in partnership with all schools in a school-led system in and beyond Walsall; to identify, utilize and broker, commission and sign-post inclusion and school improvement support and development. Enabling all pupils across the borough the opportunity to reach their potential.

- ➢ Quality assuring centrally commissioned progress and challenge activity, to ensure that it impacts on the outcomes for all learners

Ofsted:

Ofsted's aim is to promote the improvement of care and education services to at least a good standard, with a particular focus on outcomes for the disadvantaged and vulnerable. 'We are committed to supporting the development of a highly educated, productive and safer society, where children and young people can succeed whatever their background.[15]

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[15] Ofsted's Equality Objectives 2016-2020