

## **Cabinet – 8 November 2006**

### **Performance of Schools 2005-06**

**Portfolio:** Councillor Zahid Ali, Children's Services

**Service:** Education Walsall

**Wards:** All

**Key decision:** No

**Forward plan:** No

#### **Summary of report**

A brief statistical profile is attached at Appendix A. The Second Edition of the Full Report can be found on The Education Walsall website and a final report will be published in January 2007 when all national data is available.

**There has been a continued improvement in school performance between September 2005 and July 2006.**

**Key Stage 1** – schools are now performing at or beyond the national average, with overall improvement in the top quartile of all authorities. The gap has, therefore, significantly reduced. Cabinet will recollect that an extra £1m was provided by the Council to pump prime the improvements that were required in primary education, and this improvement is in part due to this additional investment.

**Key Stage 2** – the gap between Walsall and all schools nationally has reduced significantly in all subjects assessed and performance is now close to the national average. Overall improvement is in the top quartile of all authorities.

**Key Stage 3** – schools have made significant improvements in all subjects this year, the gap has significantly reduced and overall improvement is in the top quartile of all authorities.

**Key Stage 4** – national data shows a 2% improvement but there has been a pleasing 4% improvement in the number of pupils gaining 5+ GCSEs at A\*-C Grades (or equivalent).

**Ethnic Minority Achievement** - Nationally and in Walsall there have been concerns about the rate of progress for ethnic minority pupils. In general terms, ethnic minority pupils have made good progress in key stages 1 and 2 from 2002 to 2006. Progress at key stage 3 is satisfactory overall with Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils making slower progress at key stage 4.

**Exclusions** – are as expected in order to achieve the 2008 target, with a significant overall reduction since 2001.

**Absence** – fell slightly in 2005/06 owing to the winter influenza virus but targets for 2008 are still expected to be achieved.

**Ofsted Inspection of schools:** 58% of schools inspected (41 in total) were graded as good or better overall; with just under 10% graded inadequate. This is now a profile very similar to the national picture. The three pupil referral units were graded good contrary to the national profile and one primary and one special school were identified as outstanding.

Further analysis of performance will be undertaken as national data becomes available and this will inform the refreshing of The Children and Young People's Plan and The Excellence in Walsall Plan (Education).

### **Recommendations**

- (1) That Cabinet note the continued improvements in schools and write to schools to congratulate them on their achievements.
- (2) That Cabinet charge the Portfolio Holder with setting up a Working Group to review and monitor the actions taken to improve the achievement of BME children and young people and to identify any gaps, particularly in relation to wider community support for education and recommend a course of action.

### **Resource and legal considerations**

None

### **Citizen impact**

Making our schools great is one of the key commitments of the Council and these achievements will assist with the future potential of all young people to contribute to the regeneration of Walsall.

### **Community safety**

None

### **Environmental impact**

None

## Performance and risk management issues

None

## Equality implications

The gap in performance of pupils in Walsall in relation to the national average has been considerably reduced and in one case has been exceeded. As a result of detailed analysis groups of young people will be supported to ensure that all pupils in Walsall perform at expected levels for the age and ability.

## Consultation

## Vision 2008

'Making our schools Great'

## Background papers

Attainment and Progress - Summary Report (Appendix A)

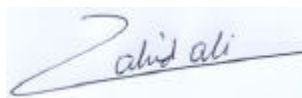
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David Brown  
Executive Director

30 October 2006



Councillor Zahid Ali  
Portfolio holder

30 October 2006



Helen Denton  
Managing Director, Education Walsall

30 October 2006

**Attainment and Progress Report 2006 – Summary**

**Updated 26 October 2006**

Please note this release contains updated figures.

A Final Report will be published later this term when all national data is known and the data in this report verified.

## **HEADLINES**

### Key Stage 1 (6 / 7 year olds)

- Walsall is now performing at or above the national average.
- Walsall is now in the top 50% of all local authorities for overall performance.
- Walsall is the highest performing in the statistical neighbour group in reading, mathematics and science and second highest in writing.

### Key Stage 2 ( 10 / 11 year olds)

- Walsall's performance has improved by 4% in mathematics, 1% in English and 1% in Science.
- Walsall is now only one percentage point below the national average in English.

### Key Stage 3 (13 / 14 year olds)

- Walsall's performance has improved by 6% in mathematics, 7% in science and 6% in ICT, with English remaining the same.

### Key Stage 4 (15 / 16 year olds)

- Walsall's performance at 5 A\*-C GCSE improved by 4% to 50%.
- Only two schools performed below 35% (one of which is now closed).

### Ethnic Minority Achievement

- Nationally and in Walsall there have been concerns about the rate of progress for ethnic minority pupils.
- In general terms, ethnic minority pupils have made good progress in key stages 1 and 2 from 2002 to 2006. Progress at key stage 3 is satisfactory overall with Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils making slower progress at key stage 4.

### Permanent Exclusions

- Walsall maintained the very low numbers of permanent exclusions, out-performing both the national and statistical neighbourhood average.

### Fixed Term Exclusions

- The total number of secondary fixed term exclusions fell by 39.5%. The numbers of pupil days lost dropped from 7,904 to 5,225.

### Attendance / Absence

- Absence rates increased across the country and Walsall also showed a slight increase but not as much as the national figure.
- Audit of the absence rates across the year show that in Walsall this increase was largely due to the winter vomiting virus that severely affected a number of schools.

- Walsall continues to have higher attendance rates than local neighbours.

#### Looked After Children (LAC)

- There have been very slight falls in the percentage of LAC achieving levels 2 and 3 and a 1% increase in those achieving 5 A\*-C GCSE. The cohort numbers are low, e.g. there were 28 potential candidates for Key Stage 4 examinations but of these, six attended special schools and a further 11 had statements of Special Educational Needs. A robust review of action to improve this performance has taken place and new work is planned to meet the identified needs.

#### Ofsted Inspections

- 90.4% of schools inspected last year were judged satisfactory or above with 53.6% good and 4.8% (2 schools) outstanding.

# The Foundation Stage

Nationally, there have been concerns about the lack of consistency and robustness of assessment processes and the resulting Foundation Stage data from the last three years. In Walsall the increased rigour in moderation across the borough and the support given to Foundation Stage leaders and practitioners has resulted in a more consistent approach to assessment and a truer reflection of attainment on entry and exit. The use of the 'E' profile by all schools has enhanced the tracking of progress within schools and across schools. This is a position of strength and gives a firm foundation for 2006/07.

## National Targets for Foundation Stage 2008 (NEW)

- To improve the percentage of children achieving a total score of 78 or more and 6+ in all 3 scales within Personal, Social and Emotional Development and 6+ in all 4 scales within Communication Language and Literacy.
- To narrow the gap between pupils from the 20% lowest achieving pupils and the others.

In Walsall in 2006:

- Over half (53%) of pupils had a total score of 78 or more. However, only 33% achieved 6+ in all scales in both personal, social and emotional development (PSED) and communication, language and literacy (CLL). It is, therefore proposed to set a target in this measure for 36% of all pupils. It is also proposed to set a further target to increase the average total score for the lowest 20% of results from 44 to 48.

The challenges for schools in 2006/07 will be:

- To ensure an appropriate curriculum and strategies are in place to enable these pupils in year 1 to continue their speedy progress in phonics and to improve their progress in the basic skills of communication, writing and problem solving.

There is a strong focus on PSED and Communication in the planned training for 2006/07.

- Communicating Matters
- SEAL for Foundation Stage
- Effective Early Learning (EEL)

# Key Stage 1

## Key Stage 1 Headlines

- Walsall is now performing **at or beyond the national average for Level 2+**. Other than in writing the gap continues to narrow at the higher Level 3.
- There has been improvement in all four areas assessed at level 2 or above – with significant improvements in reading and science. The improvement in reading is most likely associated with increased teaching of phonics through the strategies employed by Education Walsall (e.g. Ruth Miskin Literacy and The Early Language Programme).
- There has been a **significant closing of the gap** between Walsall and all schools nationally in all subjects assessed (2001-2006) and **Walsall is now ranked for overall performance at Key Stage 1 in the top 50% of all local authorities.**
- Walsall is now the **highest performing in the group of our statistical neighbours in reading, mathematics and science and 2<sup>nd</sup> highest in writing.**
- At the more secure level 2b there has been pleasing improvements in both reading and writing.
- There has been a **narrowing of the gender gap across all subjects assessed** and this is now in line with that found nationally.
- There has been a **significant improvement in reading, writing and mathematics amongst the Bangladeshi and Pakistani boys.** The performance across our ethnic groups is more even than in previous years, though the performance of our Pakistani pupils is still slightly behind the rest of the cohort.

	Reading	Writing	Mathematics
<b>Level 2+</b>	85% (+3%)	81% (+1%)	90% (+1)
<b>Level 2b+</b>	71% (+3%)	59% (+2%)	71% (+1%)
<b>Level 3</b>	23% (+1%)	10% (-2%)	19% (-1%)
<b>Distance to national (L2+)</b>	+1% (-3% in 2005)	0% (-2% in 2005)	0% (-2% in 2005)

## Closing the gap?

Key Stage 1	2001 Walsall	2001 National	Difference 2001	2006 Walsall	2006 National	Difference 2006
Reading L2+	82	84	-2%	85	84	1
Writing L2+	82	86	-4%	81	81	0
Mathematics L2+	89	91	-2%	90	90	0

## How do we compare with all authorities? Level 2+

KS1 Provisional National Ranking 2006 (out of 150)	Reading	Writing	Mathematics	Science	Overall
	61 (111)	73 (105)	77 (107)	76	74

Last year rankings are in brackets ( )

## Statistical Neighbours (11 Authorities)

Reading Rank: 1<sup>st</sup> (↑)

Writing Rank: Joint 2<sup>nd</sup> (↑)

Mathematics Rank: Joint 1<sup>st</sup> (↑)

Science Rank: Joint 1<sup>st</sup> (↑)



## Key Stage 1 - cont

### National Grades

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Improvement 2004-2006</b>	<b>Improvement 2005-2006</b>	<b>Overall Quartile</b>
Reading	A	A	C
Writing	A	A	C
Mathematics	B	A	C

## Key Stage 2

### Key Stage 2 Headlines

- All three subjects continue to improve at both the expected and higher levels. There has been a **significant 4% improvement in mathematics at level 4 and above** and a significant 4% improvement in English at the higher level 5.
- Targets set with the DfES have been missed by 2% in English and 6% in mathematics. Analysis of pupil progress shows that these targets were obtainable. There has been a **significant narrowing of the gap in performance against target in mathematics** and this is very pleasing as it has been a major focus through a school partnering programme.
- Of the 76 primary schools open in September (excluding special schools) 42 achieved or exceeded their target in English and 38 in mathematics. Of the five closing primary schools three attained their targets in both English and mathematics; the other two did not achieve their targets in either subject.
- DfES statistics show that there were 30 schools below the floor target (65% Level 4+) for English in 2003; this reduced to 16 in 2005 and 12 schools in 2006. **This 60% reduction of schools below the 65% threshold exceeds the DfES national PSA target for 2008 of 40%.**
- DfES statistics show that there were 39 schools below the floor target (65% Level 4+) for mathematics in 2003; this reduced to 28 in 2005 and 20 schools in 2006. **This 49% reduction of schools below the 65% threshold exceeds the DfES national PSA target for 2008 of 40%.**
- There has been a **significant closing of the gap between Walsall and all schools nationally since 2001** and schools and pupils should be congratulated on their performance.
- Our **statistical neighbours** have improved at a slightly faster rate **other than in mathematics where Walsall has improved significantly.**
- The performance of boys against girls remains very similar to that found nationally with boys performance in English being significantly below that of girls.
- Bangladeshi and Pakistani heritage pupils perform significantly lower than the rest of the cohort in English and mathematics. Although smaller in number Black Caribbean heritage pupils perform significantly lower than the rest of the cohort in mathematics.
- Pakistani heritage pupils perform significantly lower than the rest of the cohort in science and Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean pupils perform lower than the rest of the cohort.

## Key Stage 2

	English	Mathematics	Science	Closing the gap?
<b>Level 4+</b>	78% (+1%)	74% (+4%)	84% (+1%)	
<b>Level 5</b>	29% (+4%)	28% (+2%)	40% (0%)	
<b>Distance from L4+ target</b>	-2% (-2% in 2005)	-6% (-11% in 2005)	n/a	
<b>Distance to national (L4+)</b>	-1% (-2% in 2005)	-2% (-5% in 2005)	-3% (-3% in 2005)	

Key Stage 2	2001 Walsall	2001 National	Difference 2001	2006 Walsall	2006 National	Difference 2006
English L4+	68	75	-7	78	79	-1
Mathematics L4+	62	71	-9	74	76	-2
Science L4+	81	87	-6	84	87	-3

### How do we compare with all authorities? Level 4+

KS2 Provisional National Ranking 2006 (out of 150)	English	Mathematics	Science	Overall
	84 (92)	91 (123)	110 (121)	99 (116)

Last year rankings are in brackets ( )

### Statistical Neighbours (10 Authorities)

English Rank: Joint 5<sup>th</sup> (↓)

Mathematics Rank: 6<sup>th</sup> (↑)

Science Rank: 7<sup>th</sup> (↓)

### National Grades

Subject	Improvement 2004-2006	Improvement 2005-2006	Overall Quartile
English	A	B	C
Mathematics	A	A	C
Science	A	B	D
Overall	A	A	C

# Key Stage 3

## Key Stage 3 Headlines

- There has **been significant improvement across all subjects tested/assessed this year** – particularly in mathematics and science and English at the higher level 6 and above.
- Between 2005 and 2006 Walsall schools were the joint 2<sup>nd</sup> highest improved in science; joint 6<sup>th</sup> in mathematics and joint 29<sup>th</sup> in English.
- In comparison with our statistical neighbours there has been a significant improvement in English, mathematics and science.
- Our DfES **target in mathematics was achieved this year** and schools are closer to achieving their English and science targets that ever before.
- 10 schools (53%) achieved or exceeded their mathematics target and this is very pleasing as it has been a key focus of development. In English 5 schools (26%) achieved or exceeded their target; and in science 8 schools (42%) achieved or exceeded their target.
- The **gap between Walsall and all schools nationally has significantly reduced** since 2001 in English, mathematics and science.
- Girls continue to outperform boys in English, mathematics and science; significantly so in English. This mirrors the national trend of performance.
- Pakistani and white British heritage pupils perform significantly lower than the rest of the cohort in English. In mathematics and science Pakistani pupils perform significantly lower than the rest of the cohort.

	English	Mathematics	Science	ICT
<b>Level 5+</b>	69% (=%)	73% (+6%)	68% (+7%)	74% (+6%)
<b>Level 6+</b>	29% (+1%)	52% (+7%)	35% (+6%)	29% (+8%)
<b>Distance from L5+ target</b>	-7% (-5% in 2005)	= (-2% in 2005)	-2% (-2% in 2005)	0% (-5% in 2005)
<b>Distance to national (L5+)</b>	-3% (-5% in 2005)	-4% (-7% in 2005)	-4% (-9% in 2005)	-% (-1% in 2005)

## Closing the gap?

Key Stage 3	2001 Walsall	2001 National	Difference 2001	2006 Walsall	2006 National	Difference 2006
English L5+	54	65	-11%	69	72	-3
Mathematics L5+	59	66	-7%	73	77	-4
Science L5+	58	66	-8%	68	72	-4

## How do we compare with all authorities? Level 5+

KS3 Provisional National Ranking 2006 (out of 150)	English	Mathematics	Science	Overall
	98 (111)	102 (122)	95 (124)	103 (119)

Last year rankings are in brackets ( )

## Statistical Neighbours (11 Authorities)

English Rank: Joint 4<sup>th</sup> (↑)

Mathematics Rank: 4<sup>th</sup> (↑)

Science Rank: Joint 4<sup>th</sup> (↑)

## National Grades

Subject	Improvement 2004-2006	Improvement 2005-2006	Overall Quartile
English	A	B	C
Mathematics	A	A	C
Science	A	A	C
Overall	A	A	C

# Key Stage 4

## Key Stage 4 Headlines

- There has been a pleasing 4% improvement in Walsall against a 2% improvement nationally.
- Targets set with DfES have been exceeded by 2%. 14 schools have met or exceeded the 5+A\*-C (or equivalent) GCSE targets. This represents a very good improvement on previous years.
- Two schools performed below the 25% national threshold – one of these has just closed.
- There has been a small reduction in the number of pupils achieving 5+A\*-C (or equivalent) GCSEs including English and mathematics. This is a key area of focus.
- Whilst there has been significant improvement this year, the gap between Walsall and all schools is likely to remain too wide.
- Too many pupils still leave school without obtaining a single GCSE (or equivalent).

	England Average 2006	Walsall All pupils 2006	Walsall Girls 2006	Walsall Boys 2006
5+A*-C or equivalent GCSE	59%	50%	56%	44%
1+ A*-G	98%	94%	96%	93%
5+ A*-C including English and Maths	46%	35%	40%	31%
5+A*-G	91%	86%	90%	82%
5+ A*-G including English and Maths	88%	82%	86%	78%
Distance from Target		2%	-	-
Improvement 05-06		4%	5%	3%
Capped APS	296	266.1	285.4	248.5
Uncapped APS	364.2	332.1	359.8	306.8

Note: Above figures exclude the Academy.

2006 Walsall and National data based on end of KS4 reporting and is taken from DfES data released for performance tables 19/10/2006

### Closing the gap?

Key Stage 4	2001 Walsall	2001 National	Difference 2001	2006 Walsall	2006 National	Difference 2006
5+A*-C (equiv)	40.6	50.1	-9.5	50	59	-9

### How do we compare with all authorities?

KS4 Provisional National Ranking 2006 (out of 150)	5+A*-C	5+A*-C including En & Maths	Any passes	Capped APS	Uncapped APS
	123 (132)	125 (118)	127 (130)	130 (131)	126 (127)

Last year's rankings are in brackets ( )

### Statistical Neighbours (11 Authorities)

5+ A\*-C GCSE 6<sup>th</sup> (↑)

5+ A\*-C GCSE (including English and maths) 8<sup>th</sup> (→)

# Ethnic Minority Progress

- Nationally and in Walsall there have been concerns about the rate of progress for ethnic minority pupils from key stage 1, to when they leave statutory education at key stage 4.
- In general terms ethnic minority pupils have made good progress in key stage 1 and 2 from 2002 to 2006. Progress at key stage 3 is satisfactory overall with Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils making slower progress.
- Indian pupils make good progress against their group nationally
- Writing and the application and use of language hinders specific ethnic groups progress and in particular boys, from the Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities.
- As pupils get older the gap between their performance and that of other pupils from the same ethnic group gets wider and is at its greatest at key stage 4.
- Schools need to work closely together to build upon the promising start made at key stage 1 and to a large extent key stage 2.
- Education Walsall is developing strategies and actions to help schools close the gap between Walsall results and the national averages for the various groups.
- The Walsall Raising Minority achievement Partnership (WREMAP) team is working schools and community groups such as Cal Aaj and Mandate to gain the support of parents, community groups and alternative community places of learning through partnership and networking.
- WREMAP has a strong focus upon partnership with schools and community groups which is helping embed;
- A successful primary EAL project in seven schools is supported by a WREMAP consultant to assist with planning, staff training and coaching complementing the Ruth Miskin Literacy (RML) strategy and is in place in all schools with slow rates of progress.
- An Intensive support programme (ISP) in key schools focuses upon structured layered targets for pupils who are in danger of being left behind
- Walsall will become a hub authority for the secondary EAL project, based upon the success of the primary pilot and managed by WREMAP
- WREMAP is working with the Walsall secondary strategy team giving targeted support for four secondary schools for subject specific language training through science
- A WREMAP consultant is working through close partnership with extended education providers to enable pupils to complete school work and build capacity amongst providers

# Exclusions

## PERMANENT

- There were 27 permanent exclusions in the 2005/2006 academic year this was a slight increase from 25 permanent exclusions in the previous academic year overall. However, the long-term trend shows that permanent exclusions have decreased by 66% since 2001/2002 (79 exclusions). As a percentage of the school population (0.06%) our rate of exclusion is almost half that of our statistical neighbours (0.10%).
- Secondary Exclusion figures fell for the fourth year running from 22 in 2004/2005 to 21 in 2005/2006 a decrease of 67% since 2001/2002 (67 exclusions) and at 0.1% of the school population is less than half that of our statistical neighbours (0.21%)
- The figure of 21 represents the lowest recorded number of secondary permanent exclusions in the last 12 years
- Primary Exclusion figures increased for the 2005 /2006 academic year to 6 compared to the figure of 3 for 2004 /2005 the rise is the first since 2001/2002 when there were 12 permanent exclusions. As a percentage of the school population (0.02%) our rate of exclusion is the same as our statistical neighbours.
- There were no permanent exclusions from Special schools in Walsall for the third year running.
- Permanent exclusions from Walsall schools during 2005/06 are 50% lower than the national figure for 2004/05. It is unlikely that future published figures permanent exclusions will show a 50% decrease nationally.

*The only comparative national data presently available comes from the DfES First Release on Permanent and Fixed Term Exclusions for 2004/05 (June 2006)*

<b>Permanent Exclusions as a Percentage of the School Population</b>				
	Primary	Secondary	Special Total	Total
<b>Walsall 05/06</b>	<b>0.02</b>	<b>0.10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.06</b>
Stat Neighbours 05/06	0.02	0.21	0.05	0.10
National 04/05	0.03	0.24	0.31	0.12

## FIXED TERM – LONGER THAN 15 DAYS

- The Exclusions Team continues to closely monitor and track fixed term exclusions of more than 15 days in a single block.
- Overall, there has been a drop in the total number of exclusions of more than 15 days, from 21 in 2004/05 down to 16 in 2005/06. This represents a drop of almost 25%.
- In the Secondary sector, however, there has been a dramatic drop in the use of fixed term exclusions of more than 15 days, with overall figures falling from 21 to 10, a reduction of more than 50%.



## FIXED TERM

Academic Year 2004/2005			
School Type	Tot. No. Exc.	Tot. No. Pupils	Tot. No. of days lost
Secondary	2463	1953	7904
Primary	231	180	818.5
Special	127	81	308.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>2821</b>	<b>2214</b>	<b>9031</b>

Academic Year 2005/2006 (not validated)			
School Type	Tot. No. Exc.	Tot. No. Pupils	Tot. No. of days lost
Secondary	1491	963	5225
Primary	283	158	872.5
Special	120	55	313
<b>Total</b>	<b>1894</b>	<b>1176</b>	<b>6410.5</b>

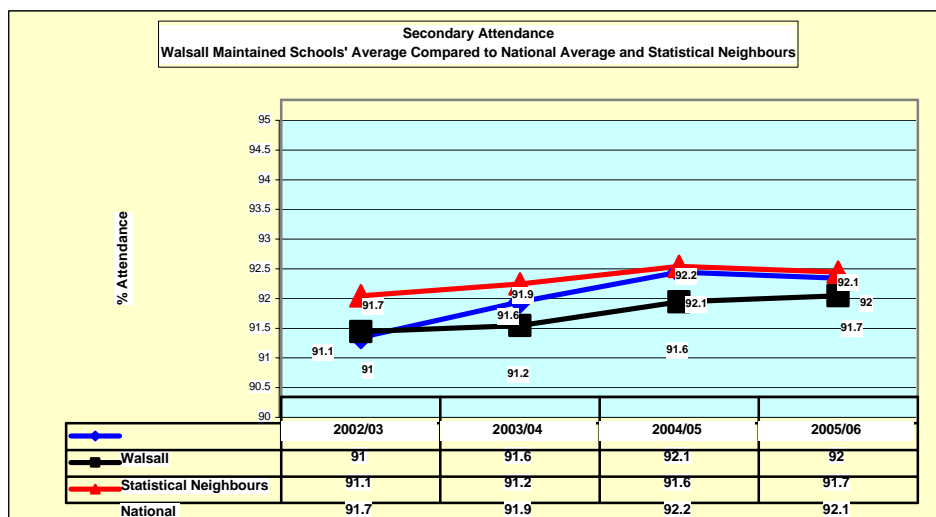
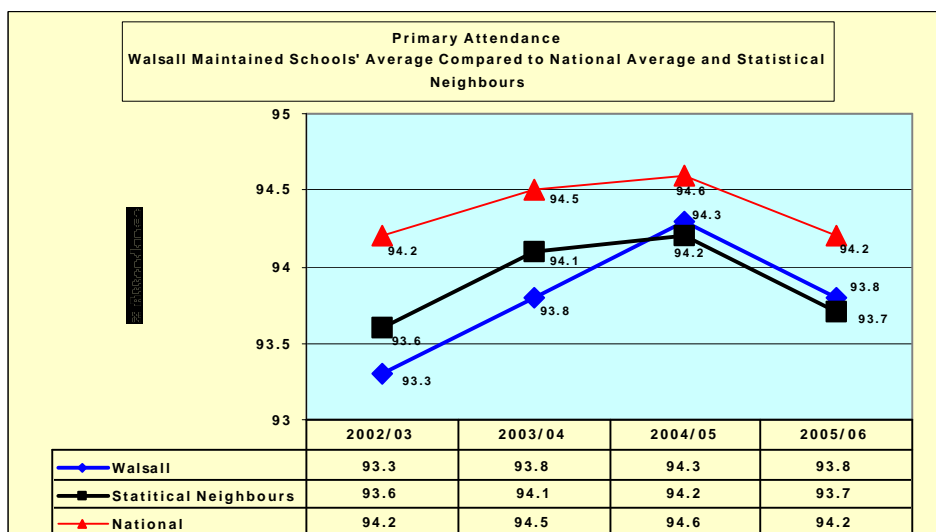
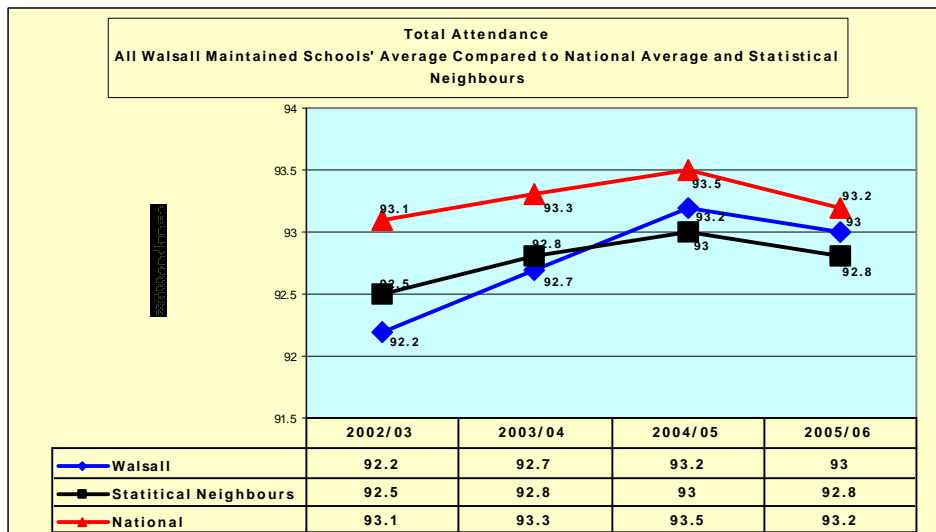
- Total number of secondary fixed term exclusions for 2005 / 2006 has fallen by a creditable 39.5% compared to the 2004 / 2005 academic year.
- The total number of individual secondary pupils excluded during 2005 / 2006 shows an outstanding reduction of almost 50% compared to the 2004 / 2005 academic year.
- The total number of days lost to secondary fixed term exclusions for 2005/2006 has fallen by 34% compared to the 2004/2005 academic year.
- Although the total number of primary fixed term exclusions for 2005 / 2006 shows an increase compared to 2004/05 the actual number of pupils who received a fixed term exclusion has been reduced by 12%
- The total number of fixed term exclusions from Special schools has shown a small reduction compared to 2004/05 but there has been a tremendous reduction of almost a third in the actual number of pupils excluded.
- Overall the total number of fixed term exclusions for secondary, primary and special schools for 2005/2006 has decreased by a third compared to the 2004/2005 academic year.
- Overall the total number of individual pupils excluded from secondary, primary and special schools during 2005/ 006 has been reduced by almost 50% compared to the 2004/2005 academic year. In terms of numbers this means there were over a thousand fewer pupils receiving fixed term exclusions from Walsall schools.

*The only comparative data presently available comes from the DfES First Release on Permanent and Fixed Term Exclusions for 2004/05 (June 2006)*

	Pupils Fixed Term Excluded as a Percentage of the School Population			
	Primary	Secondary	Special Total	Total
<b>Walsall 05/06</b>	<b>0.60</b>	<b>4.47</b>	<b>10.82</b>	<b>2.40</b>
National 04/05	1.04	9.94	18.91	5.12

- The percentage of the school population receiving fixed term exclusions from Walsall schools during 2005/06 is less than 50% of the national figure for 2004/05.
- The average length of a fixed term exclusion in Walsall during 2005/06 was 3.1 days compared to the national figure of 3.6 days for 2004/05.

# Absence



*The First Statistical Release by the DfES acknowledges, that compared to 2004/05, absence levels have increased nationally for both Primary and Secondary schools during 2005/06.*

- Absence levels in Walsall have also shown a corresponding increase in terms of the national figures but show a lower increase than that of our neighbouring authorities.
- Absence rates for both our Primary and Secondary schools remain below the average of both our statistical neighbours and our local neighbouring authorities.
- Truancy rates in both Primary and Secondary schools in Walsall remain consistently below those of our statistical neighbours and our local neighbouring authorities.
- The increase in absence in Walsall secondary schools (0.06%) was almost half that of the national increase (0.11%) enabling Walsall to narrow the gap, previously 0.12%, to 0.07% with the national figure.
- The Primary schools increase in absence rate of 0.49% was below that of our statistical neighbours' who recorded an average increase in absence rates of 0.69%.
- The greater part of this increase in Walsall Primary schools absence occurred within the authorised absence figures and DfES have acknowledged their awareness through work with the Health Protection Agency that there were unusually high levels of flu and other illnesses, which had an adverse impact on schools and Local Authorities.
- An audit of absence in schools attributable to the Nova Virus during the Spring Term has shown that 40 Primary Schools and 9 Secondary schools provided information, which showed the adverse effect of the virus on their absence rates.
- The average absence rate attributed to the virus was 0.83% in Primary schools and 0.35% in Secondary schools, which effectively increased the absence rate in those schools compared to last year.
- During the last academic year Education Walsall produced guidance and procedures for head teachers in relation to those families who take their children on holiday during term time.
- An increase in unauthorised absence in secondary schools may well be attributable to schools no longer authorising absence due to holidays. 9 Secondary schools reported an average 0.56% of absence due to such holidays.
- Education Walsall issued 35 Fixed Penalty Notices to parents who still took their children on holiday during term time despite head teachers refusing to authorise the absence.

## Ofsted Inspections: September 2005 - July 2006

During this period there were a total of 41 school inspections (excluding The Walsall Academy) undertaken by Ofsted; 31 primary; 5 secondary; 2 special; and 3 PRUs.

### Overall effectiveness grade

%Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	%Grade 4
4.88	53.66	31.71	9.76
Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate

- Two schools, Watling Street Primary and Oakwood Special School, were identified as outstanding schools.
- It is significant that all three pupil referral units have been graded as good as this goes against the national profile.
- One primary school was identified as requiring special measures and this school has now closed.
- Three schools, two primary and one secondary, were given notices to improve. All three schools have reported significant improvements in test and examinations this year.
- We believe that the overall profile of inspection grades is very similar to that found nationally and national figures will be published in November. At this point a further comparison will be made.
- Analysis of issues for action shows that in primary schools raising teacher expectations of pupils by providing greater challenge, raising the attainment of higher achieving pupils and improving aspects of assessment (marking, pupil self evaluation of their work and pupil progress tracking) are key areas for improvement.
- Analysis of issues for action shows that in secondary schools raising teacher expectations of pupils by providing greater challenge, improving assessment and the monitoring of teaching and pupil performance are key areas for improvement.