

Report of the Corporate Director of Children, Education & Communities

Improving the Outcomes of Disadvantaged Pupils

Summary

1. Improving progress and attainment outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in York remains the main area for improvement across all key stages.

Background

2. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and young people are consistently and significantly below those of their peers.
3. The gap between disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils begins in the early years and is characterised by poor outcomes in language and communication.
4. Addressing this gap becomes important to improve outcomes across the early years, primary and secondary phases as it leads to poor outcomes in English and mathematics as children move through the school system.
5. Previously Members received a report on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and young people at the September 2018 meeting and it was agreed that an update report on: Narrowing the Gap project work update be brought to the November meeting 2019.

Working together to promote improved provision for disadvantaged pupils and young people

6. The progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils in York varies by school and work has been done during 2017-18 to identify the characteristics of schools which have achieved good outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

7. This work has been shared with all schools through the 'Promoting social mobility through education' booklet produced by the School Effectiveness and Achievement Service in July 2018.
8. In June 2018 we launched City of York's Pledge – Social Mobility through Education. This was followed up with a conference September 2019.
9. The city's Social Mobility project is increasingly becoming a cross directorate initiative to tackle the disadvantaged issue that has been a persistent problem. This has provided an opportunity to work collaboratively in starting to tackle underperformance of SEND and disadvantaged children.
10. This work is being developed and driven through the Social Mobility Steering Group, which has a broad membership of private voluntary and independents (PVI), voluntary sector, schools, Local Area Teams (LATs), early years department, education, Family Learning, parents and charitable organisations across the city. This group ensures there is coherence and engagement across the city and includes the Early Years SEND Partnership and forthcoming Health Visitor Training that is focused on speech, language and communication needs.
11. Good early years education is the cornerstone of our social mobility work so the project has a focus across early years setting and schools. We will work with them to tackle development gaps at the earliest opportunity, particularly focused on the key early language and literacy skills, so that all children can begin school ready to thrive.
12. In York we are challenging the 'status quo' and asking questions at each opportunity, i.e. visits to schools and settings, at partnership and departmental meetings, and with elected Members.

Analysis of End of Key Stage results for disadvantaged pupils and young people

13. Outcomes in 2019 demonstrated some progress towards narrowing the gap for disadvantaged pupils and young people.
14. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) the three-year trend in York shows continuous improvement for disadvantaged pupils achieving the good level of development (GLD): 48.1% in 2017, 51.9% in 2018 and 54.4% in 2019. However, York disadvantaged remains below national of 56.5% despite two years of good increases.

15. The York gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged is narrowing year on year from 28.9% in 2017, 25.6% in 2018 to 23.2% in 2019. However, the gap is wider than the national average of 17.9%.
16. Key stage one (KS1) phonics York gap narrowed significantly this year from 16.4% in 2018 to 13.7% in 2019; this the same as the national gap.
17. Key stage two (KS2) reading, writing and mathematics combined measure (RWM) has not narrowed, being 26.6% for both 2018 and 2019; the national gap is 19.0%, 7.6% lower.
18. Key stage two (KS2) reading, writing and mathematics combined measure (RWM) York gap widened considerably in 2019; non disadvantaged up by 3.4%, while disadvantaged down by 3.1%. The National disadvantaged gap (2019) was 51.2% compared to York's at 41.6%; therefore, York disadvantaged outcome well below national comparator.
19. The difference between York disadvantaged and national disadvantaged increases through the key stages where GLD -2.1%, KS1 RWM -7.5%, and KS2 RWM is -9.6%.
20. The evidence tells us that a focus on communication and language (or 'the word gap') is likely to have most significant impact on long term outcomes for pupils identified as disadvantaged and for those with SEND.
21. We know that early intervention in communication, language and literacy skills has a positive impact on future academic success and the child's 'whole life' chances. Quality intervention particularly supports pupils who are disadvantaged, and/or identified with SEND, including SLCN and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH).
22. In 2018 the 'West' of the city area had the lowest outcomes for Good Level of Development (GLD) for Free School Meal (FSM) eligible children across the whole city (42%), the joint largest gap at GLD (31.5%), and the largest gap across three communication and language strands (22.53%). (Data source Nexus 2018)

Action taken to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and young people

23. Areas for further action and next steps

We are employing evidenced based approaches to improving communication and language outcomes – there is a small scale project “Early Talk for York” in the West of York, Hob Moor Primary, Westfield Primary and Woodthorpe Primary and the early years partnership providers in the catchment. This involves:

- a) Strategy and commissioning - Develop a clear strategy to early years provision in the area that takes account of the messages from the available evidence about what works to reduce the ‘word gap’ and improve communication skills. This will have greater success if there is collaboration and joined up thinking by the different stakeholders.
- b) Workforce development - We need to up skill the workforce to identify and respond to communication and language needs. We can achieve this by implementing high quality CPD for staff across all services and settings, which focuses on:
 - i. sustainable service delivery to ensure good identification of SLCN (using WellComm speech and language toolkit and Public Health England)
 - ii. development of early years speech and language pathways
 - iii. quality first teaching to improve children’s communications skills (including Level 3 Etklan Qualification and five fully funded Level 3 Qualification where practitioners are supported to become a Communication Leader in their locality).
 - iv. Speech and language therapist support to project schools and settings 3 days per week

24. Communication and community - We are committed to identifying and disseminating evidence based approaches around communication of key messages to the community, which supports improvements in the home learning environment. This will include Public Health style messages to the community.

25. How we will measure the impact of the project work:

- a) Standardised assessment tool for on entry assessment and at end of Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP).

- b) Communication and language strands of EYFSP improve over the next 3 – 5 years.
 - c) The proportion of children in 2-year-old and 3-year-old funded places in provision with Level 3 Elklan qualification and 2-year-old up take in the area increases.
 - d) ASQ3 data demonstrates an increase in outcomes in communication and language strands.
 - e) Attendance in Reception year improves.
 - f) Reach of CPD across services and of community/communication.
26. The Early Talk for York Project is gaining traction and is being well received with early years setting and schools. There is much interest from other partnership areas in the city.
27. Early years practitioners are particularly finding the Elklan training, WellComm Speech and Language assessment toolkit and the Speech Therapist particularly useful.
28. The findings from Early Talk for York project will be shared with Early Years setting and schools.

Cost of social mobility project

29. The three year cost for this project is approximately £315,000 (Year 1 - £123,000 Year 2 - £106,000, Year 3 - £86,000) with a current deficit of £205,000 (Year 1 - £93,000 Year 2 - £66,000, Year 3 - £46,000) which this bid is seeking. The project would have an estimated direct impact on circa 1400 children between 0 and 5 and a community of 25,000 adults and children with aims that leave long term, sustained change to impact on children yet to be born in an area of significant disadvantage. Scaling up the project would bring about efficiency savings on these figures.
30. There was an investment of £100K from School Forum in 2019-20 to launch the social mobility project in order to narrow the gap between disadvantaged pupils and young people and their peers.
31. The York School Academies board at their meeting in June 2019 agreed to invest in the project and this was reported to School Forum in September 2019. School Forum supported the recommendation from the board for £100k of School Improvement Project Fund funding to be allocated to the project for the academic year 2019-20.

Implications

32. It is important that there is a future investment in the social mobility project in order to sustain and upscale the work that has been started. If we are to make a positive difference to the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and young people.

Recommendations

33. Members are asked to consider:

In order to continue to improve outcomes York needs to focus its resources on those schools and groups of pupils that significantly underperform in relation to national indicators. Members of scrutiny are asked to support the work being done by the York Schools and Academies Board and to scrutinise the progress of the social mobility strategic plan.

Reason: For Members to scrutinise the progress of the social mobility strategic plan.

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Annexes

Annex A: Early Talk for York Project summary on a page November 2019 update, author Rob Newton, Social Mobility Project Manager.

Abbreviations

ASQ3 - Ages & Stages Questionnaires®, Third Edition (ASQ®-3) pinpoints developmental progress in children between the ages of one month to 5 ½ years

CPD - continuing professional development

EYFS - early years foundation stage

EYFSP - early years foundation stage profile

FSM - free school meals

GLD - good level of development

KS1 - key stage one

KS2 - key stage two

LAT - local area teams

PVI - private, voluntary and independent child care settings

RWM - reading, writing and mathematics combined outcomes

SLCN - speech, language and communication needs

SEND - special educational needs and disabilities

SEMH - Social, Emotional and Mental Health