



# Somerset's Strategy for Achieving Excellence for All: Vision and Priorities for Improvement



2016-2020

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# Introduction

The UK has to achieve a more educated and skilled workforce and cannot afford to lose the potential of so many young people who, if they are not well enough educated and skilled, will lead less productive and satisfying lives. Provision that is less than good damages the life chances of children and young people, and the economic and social cost of educational failure is immense.

In this mix the role of the Local Authority is changing to be more ambitious, focused and strategic in bringing about educational transformation for Somerset by being a strong and influential partner and commissioner with schools and other stakeholders and providers.

It is our job to build and support effective partnerships and networks that will be more effective in delivering better services and improved outcomes. It is also our role to champion more innovative and creative practice and ways of working.

Somerset is developing an ambitious Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) for 2016-2019. This Strategy for Achieving Excellence for All is a key element of the CYPP framework to deliver our vision for the 110,000 children and young people in Somerset. Our ambition is that they are safe, healthy, happy; are ambitious for their future, and develop skills for life.

Children and families are a key theme in the Somerset County Plan, recognising the importance of partnership working, providing the tools for families to help themselves and intervening early when we need to. The county plan priorities include keeping children safe, and improving their educational and health outcomes.

We work in partnership to support families and communities, as this is where children and young people live, learn and thrive.

The key features of our partnership plans are:

- **Prevention** – and addressing issues early and effectively
- **Child and family centred** – keeping children, young people and their families at the heart of everything we do
- **Collaboration** – working with others to effectively use our resources in commissioning and delivery of services
- **Integration** – providing joined up care and support that is not hindered by organisational, service or professional boundaries

Parents, families, friends, schools and wider community activity have the biggest influence and make the difference to what children and young people aspire to and what they achieve. Supporting children and young people is the responsibility of everyone who works with and cares about children and young people. There is no one agency that can do that.

During the autumn 2015 Somerset Local Authority (LA) held a series of workshops with leaders and representatives from our wide ranging child care, early help, education, skills and business sectors, to agree a shared vision for Somerset, and to develop the underpinning strategies that will accelerate our ambition to make Somerset a **great place for children and young people to grow up, learn, develop and achieve:**

- Somerset's Strategy for Early Years
- Somerset's Strategy for Primary Education
- Somerset's Strategy for Improving Educational Outcomes for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- Somerset's Strategy for Secondary Education
- Somerset's Strategy for Governance
- Somerset's Strategy for Employment and Skills

Each of these six underpinning strategies has been co-produced with our partners and sets out the specific ambition and priorities for each stage in a child and young person's life, from early years to Further Education and employment.

These strategies reflect our partnership ambition, setting out our joint intentions and the framework by which we will improve.

## **Our Guiding Principles**

We believe that:

- Every child is unique and constantly learning
- Every child can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences meet their individual needs and where there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/carers
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates

# Section One: Our Strategy

## Our Vision

Our vision is for Somerset to be the most forward looking area in England for education and learning so that we are the best place for children and young people to grow up, learn, develop and achieve. We want to secure the best possible future for our children and families, and a bright economic future for every community in Somerset.

Somerset should be a place where families thrive and all children learn and develop well from their earliest years so that they are ready to succeed at school, have excellent foundations for learning and are equipped well for achievement in life, no matter what their background. We want to ensure that all children and young people have access to activities that can enrich their lives such as music, outdoor education, the arts, sports and voluntary groups. We recognise that health and wellbeing, and a safe learning environment, contribute significantly to the achievement of children and young people. This can be realised by developing a whole-school approach to health and wellbeing and through working in effective partnerships at both the universal level and to meet targeted need.

In Somerset we have the same expectations for every child and young person to make good progress in their learning, to achieve well and to have the best opportunities for an independent economic and social life as they become young adults. Every child and young person should go to a good or outstanding early years setting and school, have access to the best teaching, and benefit from schools and other providers working in partnership with each other to share best practice as they continue to improve.



Our vision is that every child and young person, from pre-birth to age 19, (25 for children with special educational needs and disabilities) and their family, who need early help services will receive them in a timely and responsive way. That all children and young people are safeguarded, their educational, social and emotional needs are met and outcomes are good, and they are able to contribute positively to their communities now and in the future, including through active engagement in learning and employment.

Our strategic priorities for Children's Services are to ensure all children get the best start in their early years and all pupils can go to a good school and achieve their full potential; to shape education and skills provision around the needs of the Somerset economy and ensure all young people move on to positive destinations, training and employment; and to improve services and outcomes for the most disadvantaged

children, young people and families in Somerset. We aim to target early help services for the most vulnerable children, young people and families who require additional support, with an absolute focus on delivering better outcomes. Children, young people and families should be able to access the right services at the right time in the right place. We aim to place them at the heart of everything we do, working in a more integrated way and avoiding, where possible, single service interventions which may lack co-ordination or result in wasteful duplication.

We will see provision that ensures:

- All children, young people (from pre-birth to age 19, or 25 if they have Special Educational Needs) and their families, who need support, receive the right sort of help, in the right place, at the right time and are not disadvantaged by their circumstances
- Every child and young person has the opportunity to attend a good or outstanding early years setting and school and benefit from the best teaching
- All Somerset's children have high aspirations for their future, and are enabled and provided with equality of opportunity to achieve those aspirations

In being successful we will see children who:

- Are resilient individuals
- Have British values and respect for others
- Understand and respect the environment
- Have a passion for life-long learning
- Are able to develop positive choices in diet, physical activity and relationships
- Have the attitudes and skills that enable them to contribute positively to the local and global community, now and in the future



## Our Ambition

Central to our ambition is the desire to create the conditions in which pupils experience the best learning and teaching, and where pupils' social, moral and intellectual development and confidence can flourish.

We want every child in Somerset to achieve well above expectations and not to be held back by their social background. We want every young person to benefit from a broad range of pathways to further learning and employment, for their own achievement and for the success of the Somerset economy. One of the critical strands of our local vision is reaching out to the community, local businesses, local providers and universities. We want to ensure that vulnerable children and families have their needs met early so that they do not experience the level of challenge and difficulty in their lives that requires statutory interventions. They should have the same opportunities as all other children and families to flourish, to stay safe and well, and succeed in the education system. To create these conditions, we need to focus on pupil progress and attainment across all abilities, and better understand and

respond to the many factors which influence it, including children's health and wellbeing and parental involvement.

We do this by focusing relentlessly on improving standards and the quality of education and learning so that excellence is promoted across the system. We aim to ensure children continue to get a good start in life, by working with their parents and carers, alongside all the agencies who work with very young children and their families, particularly health practitioners and those providing services in community based arrangements and by promoting the highest quality early learning and childcare in the Foundation Stage. We work tirelessly to ensure every child can go to a good or better school, where they can make good progress and every child has fair access to school places. In addition, we aim to ensure every young person to age 19 (25 where appropriate), is engaged in purposeful education and training and each is well prepared for skilled employment and higher learning.

Ensuring the most vulnerable learners experience success is one of our top priorities. Children in care, young offenders, excluded pupils, learners with special educational needs and disabilities, and children from families on low incomes, all experience significant barriers to their achievement and attain less well than their peers. We want to close the attainment gaps that exist as a barrier to their future success.

We want to ensure that, with our available resources for early help and prevention, we achieve more than we do now, making a significant difference to the lives of children and families. We want to prevent the escalation of needs where we can and identify the likelihood of problems emerging in the first place. We want to reduce demand for statutory children's social care and to help 'step down' social care cases from Children in Need, Children with Protection Plans and Children in Care, where it is safe to do so.

We will achieve our ambitions by learning from and spreading the influence of the best, whether locally, nationally or internationally, and through working in partnership across agencies, all types of school and phases of education and learning. We will improve our collaboration with partners across the business sectors, local government, health, social care, and the voluntary and community sectors. In particular, we will work more closely with parents, carers, local communities and children and young people, listening and acting on what they tell us.

We will support the best Early Years settings, schools and their leaders to lead the system and drive improvement through collaboration across all schools, settings, and education and training providers, supporting and challenging each other to improve, so that we are able to transform outcomes for all children and young people more rapidly. We will promote innovation and creativity in teaching and learning and the curriculum, so that Somerset achieves a world class education system, greater social mobility, and reverses the national trends of under-performance for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups which hold back progress in our economy and our society.

We see learning as a lifelong process in which learners should always be able to progress successfully to the next stage of their lives, with the necessary foundations for success; to develop their skills, training and qualifications both in and out of work and in informal and formal learning situations. We give particular priority to improving the skills and employability of 14 to 25 year olds, so that they make a good start to adult life and their potential is not lost.



We will work with Early Years settings, schools, post-16 providers and partners to ensure that children, young people and families are able to access the right services at the right time in the right place. Through developing more effective early intervention and prevention services we aim to reduce the numbers of children, young people and families requiring specialist interventions and experiencing poorer outcomes and social exclusion.

To create these conditions, we need to focus relentlessly on improving standards and the quality of teaching and learning, so that excellence is promoted along every step of a child's developmental and learning journey, by

- Raising our aspirations for **all** children and young people, so that every child is inspired and supported to achieve their full potential
- Listening to children and young people and acting on what they tell us
- Working collaboratively and effectively with all partners, parents and carers to minimise any barriers to learning and to maximise opportunities for all
- Ensuring quality and consistency in all Early Years settings, schools, and post 16 education and training, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- Developing inspirational early years and education leaders (including management committees and boards of governors), who reflect and share national, regional and local best practice
- Ensuring all children and young people are supported to make the best choice about their own futures, and empowered to achieve their ambitions

# Key Developments 2014/15

During 2014/15:

- The Local Authority created an 'Early Help' Schools' reference group of fifteen middle leaders, from different school settings, to share and shape the Early Help Strategy. This key reference group has been instrumental in determining the way forward
- Somerset Health Visitors (HV) worked with Early Years providers across Somerset, to ensure that every child aged 2 to 2.5 years is offered an integrated developmental review, using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ3) recommended nationally
- A tool was created by the Early Years team to enable settings to look up the name of their link Health Visitor. This supports the review and planning for children who are failing to achieve their developmental milestones. A process tool was developed and agreed by providers and Health Visitors. Training was delivered to at least 200 staff from Early Years settings and HV teams, funded by the Department for Health
- Cluster groups of Early Years providers, including primary schools, were offered funding for projects related to raising achievement and readiness for school. All primary schools and Early Years providers in Taunton collaborated and accessed £8k to commission the development of a website which will be used to prepare children for school
- In 2014, Public Health at SCC commissioned the bi-annual Somerset Children and Young People's Survey. This provides schools with valuable data relating to pupils' feelings about their health and wellbeing, safety and aspirations. Findings from the first survey showed a deficit in children and young people's emotional resilience, which led to the commissioning of the Emotion Coaching Programme. This has been well received by those involved including Headteachers, teachers, Parent and Family Support Advisors and Early Help staff
- We implemented the Young People's Engagement Project and have developed a Mental Health Toolkit as a hub of information and resources for staff to support young people's mental health
- Somerset Association of Primary Headteachers and Officers (SAPHTO) continued to deliver the Primary Challenge 2013-16 including:



- Cross Phase Progression Projects: data shows that at least one project has been successful in supporting improved progress across transition
- SAPHTO conference held in July 2015 on the best use of Pupil Premium money.
- All primary schools have now had Prevent training
- ICT training was delivered to all primary schools about the expectations of the new ICT curriculum and the feedback was extremely positive
- SAPHTO commissioned a 3-year package of support and training for new Headteachers in Somerset:
  - Year 1 – Induction event and 3 events with Mentors
  - Year 2 – Coaching Training
  - Year 3 – Mentoring a New Headteacher
- SAPHTO worked with Support Services for Education (SSE) to create an attractive pack to encourage applications to Somerset Headteacher vacancies
- Most Community Learning Partnerships (CLPs) submitted development plans with broadly common themes based on the Primary Challenge Plan. Feedback from questionnaires confirmed growing professional collaboration, training, development and innovation within CLPs
- Headteachers confirm that working closely with others is impacting positively on a range of areas relating to their work. There is also evidence that working more effectively with others is impacting positively on outcomes for learners
- There is a growing appreciation of a 'local solutions approach': collaborative projects, and sharing of information, resources and expertise between schools and expanding the concept of system leadership
- 2014-15 was the second year of the Somerset Secondary Challenge. There are three key priorities running through the two-year delivery plan:
  1. Challenge – putting the challenge into the Somerset Challenge: challenging each other to improve and to ensure the maximum achievement of every student, in every school and family
  2. Collaboration – facilitating constructive collaboration and challenge through families of schools and providing a platform for joint practice development and the co-creation of solutions
  3. Knowledge mobilisation – ensuring that knowledge of effective practice is captured, shared and transferred effectively.
- Somerset made the 4<sup>th</sup> greatest improvement of all Local Authorities for its GCSE results in 2015, indicating the Somerset Challenge is beginning to have a positive impact for most children and young people

- We established a Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) multi-agency strategy Board and commenced implementation of a supporting work programme including:
  - Engagement and Participation strategy, delivering the DfE commended 'Young People's Champion' programme; development of a Young Person's Forum ('Unstoppables')
  - A comprehensive review of special educational needs' provision. Infrastructure changes were implemented with head teachers of specialist provision, including a 'planned places' process for specialist provision
  - Established a range of service user feedback mechanisms which are being evaluated and key themes developed into lines of enquiry for focus groups
- We developed an increasing range of innovative and evidence based interventions by the Educational Psychology Service, to support school staff to deliver better outcomes for children with special educational needs. This has included training developments such as 'ELSA', 'Playing Up and Growing Up', and extending 'Team Teach' for the Children's Social Care work force
- Following on from the success from the Consultation Service for adopted children, the Educational Psychology Service has piloted JUMP (Joined Up Multi-Agency Planning) forums for particularly vulnerable Children Looked After (CLA) and care leavers aged 0-25. These are solution-focused discussions that also allow professionals to reflect upon the impact of a child's life experiences. The initial evidence of this pilot is highly encouraging
- The Learning Support Service (LSS) continued to train teaching assistants in delivering individual literacy interventions
- LSS have continued to develop their training offer to schools with the addition of courses for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) on assessment and working memory. LSS now have 4 affiliated Numicon trainers who are delivering training across the county. The service has also worked closely with the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service to produce training for schools to help with the identification of Special Educational Needs (SEN) in children whose first language is not English



- Somerset's Hearing Support Team in partnership with 'AptEd' (accreditation partner) and Somerset Centre for Integrated Learning (SCIL) enrolled staff from 17 schools across the county on Accessible Learning Environments: Learners with Hearing Impairment – an increase from 4 schools participating in the previous academic year
- The Hearing Support Team, in conjunction with specialist provision, continue to develop a screening programme across Somerset, offering hearing assessments to all pupils new to these settings
- We maintained partnership arrangements with colleges and schools to work together for a fourth year, supporting over 500 students across years 11 and 12 who were at high risk of disengaging from education or training, to make successful transitions from school to post-16 options
- We improved our capacity to attract funding into Somerset by working with Heart of South West Local Enterprise Partner (HotSWLEP) partner Local Authorities to implement the Enterprise Advisor project in Somerset. The Project will support 12 Secondary schools and improve their ability to work with local and national employers within the curriculum, improve young people's understanding of the world of work and the opportunity to create their own businesses. The project is going to be strongly linked to the County's employability strategy. Additional funding opportunities are being pursued that will benefit Somerset's young people in 2016/17 and beyond
- We worked in the true spirit of partnership with EDF Energy to have another productive year of delivering the EDF Inspire programme to all phases of education in Somerset. The programme helps to ensure that young people understand the industry and can take advantage of the opportunities that the Hinkley Point C project will provide during the build and the eventual operation of the station. Over 200 activities are delivered per year, involving up to 30,000 children, including programmes delivered to young women (250 students last year) to specifically challenge gender stereotyping in the construction and engineering industries
- EDF Energy and the Local Authority worked together to develop the Young Person's Talent Academy, actively working with young people from age 15 and their parents, in preparation for transitions to further their learning and eventually enter the world of work. SCC aims to exceed the target number of Somerset residents gaining employment through this project
- We entered into an exciting new arrangement with the Dorset and Somerset Training and Enterprise Partnership to help better inform young people, parents and educators on the options post-16 that are available in Somerset and over the county borders. This web based resource informs them of Further Education (FE) courses, apprenticeships, traineeships and other jobs with training, and explains how to access them

- The Local Authority, Careers South West and FE Colleges jointly:
  - hosted a successful Careers Fair and Higher Education Month
  - supported work experience
  - promoted effective careers advice and higher-level study, including the delivery of Higher Level Apprenticeships, through contacts with universities (especially Plymouth) and the National Networks for Collaborative Outreach



# Progress in 2014-15 and Where We Are Now

Somerset's performance across Key Stages varied in 2015, with good progress in early years and secondary, but poorer progress in primary. The attainment of vulnerable learners in Somerset compared to their peers nationally, continues to be a cause for concern.



While there has been some improvement in many areas of Somerset schools in 2015 there is still wide variability in performance. Much of the improvement is slight, below 1%, or moderate between 1 and 2%, except at Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stage 4, where good progress has been made. Our improvement trajectory (at the end of this document) sets our ambition at a faster improvement rate per year through to 2020.

Somerset compares well regionally on all data relating to young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), published for the period December 2014 to January 2015. The percentage of 18 year olds whose activity is 'not known' is significantly better than the region at less than half that of the average in the south west region.

The improvements in the EYFS represent good progress from 2014. There was slight improvement in Key Stage 1 and 2 results compared to 2014, although there are also areas of decline.

Standards at EYFS, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are above, slightly above, slightly below or in line with national average. However, there are areas with declining trends particularly when focusing on girls' and boys' performance and all vulnerable groups.

Gender differences continue to be significant, opening up markedly in the EYFS and continuing to be a key issue at all key stages, so that by GCSE just over half of boys achieve a good outcome. Boys are over-represented in figures for Special Educational Needs (SEN), exclusion from school, Children Looked After (CLA) and those not in education, training or employment (NEET). Improving their progress and attainment is a key element in raising standards overall in Somerset and in achieving full participation for all young people until aged at least 18.

The number of permanent exclusions in Somerset increased by 76% since 2012 levels, to 44 in 2014/15, and the rate of fixed term exclusions (FTE) from primary and special schools is higher than national averages. The percentage of Children

Looked After (CLA), who had one or more fixed term exclusion, was much higher than the national average in 2012/13 at 18.6% but has significantly improved in the past two years, reducing to 9% in 2014/15.

Absence rates, including Persistent Absence rates, for all pupils in primary and secondary schools in 2014, for all measures, were broadly in-line with the national average. However, pupils entitled to free school meals (FSM), those with special educational needs (SEN) and Children Looked After (CLA) have much higher absence rates than their national peers.

At Key Stage 4, the attainment and progress made by pupils with SEN (with and without statements) has improved significantly compared to 2014, and at a greater rate than their non-SEN peers, so the gaps are closing. This is really encouraging. However, at all other Key Stages, little progress is being made in improving attainment for pupils with special educational needs and the gaps are not closing.

In spite of some improvement in the outcomes for Children Looked After (CLA) their achievement gaps continue to be a concern and a key priority for improvement in 2016.

It is very disappointing that, in spite of additional resources through the pupil premium of approximately £17 million in Somerset in 2014-15, and a similar amount identified for 2015-16, the attainment gaps for pupils on free school meals have shown no improvement overall, except at Key Stage 4. This is a major priority for 2015-16.

Educational attainment gaps result in low social mobility. Children's life chances should not be determined so young and with so little chance of catching up for those who are less advantaged. Recent national and international reports have highlighted this key issue for the economy and for individual life chances. The OECD Skills Outlook Report 2013 highlighted the low literacy and numeracy skills of 16-24 year olds in the UK compared to other countries. The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission Annual Report, October 2013, focuses on what more should be done to improve social mobility through the education system and other government policy areas. A recent report from Save the Children, 'Too Young to Fail' provides a powerful analysis of achievement gaps and what we can do to improve. This is one of our top priorities in Somerset as we move forward with our Education Strategic Vision.

The final section of this document contains detailed performance information for all education stages and vulnerable learners.

# Our Priorities and Targets

As there is much to do, our planned outcomes are ambitious and challenging. We are determined to pursue them relentlessly and we believe we have the ways to achieve them. As part of our ongoing discussions and partnership with Headteachers, governors and other stakeholders there is a good level of shared ambition to achieve the following improvements in the period leading up to 2020.

## Our key priorities are to:

- Raise attainment, close achievement gaps; reduce exclusion; improve attendance; have more good and outstanding Early Years settings and schools; and ensure all young people are engaged in learning or training until at least aged 19, with a good outcome that leads to employment
- Further embed our partnership with all Early Years and childcare settings, schools and other providers, based on collaboration and shared effort, to build a more effective system of school to school support
- Continue to raise educational performance in line with agreed targets, supporting and challenging lower performing Early Years and childcare settings, schools and other providers to improve rapidly to good quality provision
- Continue to support greater choice for parents and families in every area by commissioning a sufficient and diverse supply of places in strong schools and quality Early Years settings
- Deliver improved multi-agency support for children and families who have additional needs by developing our early help and preventative services and working in a more integrated way, including co-production with parents and carers, to achieve better outcomes
- Increase our focus on, and support for, disadvantaged pupils, so that achievement gaps close for pupils entitled to free school meals (FSM), children looked after (CLA), and pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Work with schools to ensure every child has fair access to all schools and other provision, and is included and helped to participate in education which is appropriate for their needs



- Promote and support a smooth and effective transition for every child and young person, from any one educational stage and provision to another
- Continue to develop the opportunities and pathways for all 14-19 year olds to participate and succeed so that they can access higher levels of learning or employment with training to age 25
- Champion 21st century learning so that schools and other settings innovate more and achieve more, by delivering a curriculum and enrichment activities that develop pupils' skills, awareness and knowledge for the future
- Ensure all our Children's Centres make good provision for children and families and effectively reach and support the neediest families to achieve good outcomes

New ways of working in partnership are critical for success in a more diverse educational and community landscape. Our partners include families and communities, and the many different providers across the Early Years, schools, post 16 skills and employment sectors, health services and the police. This landscape requires us to drive change through strategic influence, highly effective partnership arrangements and collaborative networks. Our pooled effort and shared priorities can achieve better outcomes, increase capacity in the system and create more innovative solutions at a time of reducing levels of resource. More successful delivery in Somerset depends on the emergence of more integrated approaches, new vehicles for joint working, and more effective partnerships, particularly with parents and carers.

### **It continues to be a priority to ensure success by supporting:**

- School leaders to lead the system through stronger school partnerships. Particularly, to develop greater accountability of collaborative partnerships of schools, and to ensure they have strong working relationships, in order to provide the best opportunities and deliver the best outcomes for their children and young people
- Schools to procure support services effectively; have real choice, including high quality services through Support Services for Education (SSE)
- Increased collaborative working in the Early Years and childcare sectors
- Local 14-19 strategic partnerships to improve effectiveness and increase capacity to transform post-16 learning and training opportunities, so that they are truly excellent
- Locally based integrated teams and multi-agency working in Early Help and prevention

## Specific Priorities for 2016-17

- Build on the Troubled Families programme and embed and integrate early help and prevention services so that children's needs are identified early and those supported through an early help programme achieve a good outcome
- Continue to improve District-based working so that more decision making and coordination of services for children and young people happens locally through school collaborations and there is better integrated working between education, health and social care
- Continue to develop collaborative working across services to provide training in programmes that support parenting and build emotional resilience in children, young people and families
- Work with schools and Early Years settings to deliver a more focused approach to narrowing achievement gaps and achieve better outcomes for all vulnerable groups, with a specific focus on children entitled to free school meals (FSM), those with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Children Looked After (CLA)
- Make a significant improvement to outcomes for Children Looked After (CLA) and markedly reduce the number of CLA and care leavers who are NEET or in the youth justice system
- Successfully implement a new system of high needs funding for pupils with special educational needs, which proves to be more effective at earlier intervention to improve pupil outcomes
- Offer a whole setting approach to health and wellbeing, informed by monitoring trends in the Somerset Children and Young People's Survey, and underpinned by good quality Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education, and provision of health and wellbeing clinics in all secondary schools
- Improve outcomes for pupils with mental health needs
- Implement the Employment and Skills Strategy, including priorities to develop the vocational offer so that there is further improvement in the number of young people taking up and successfully completing apprenticeships and a further reduction in youth unemployment
- Reduce the rising cost of Special Educational Needs (SEN) Transport and make more efficient use of DSG funding by reducing the increasing costs of



SEN pupils placed out of county, as well as working with schools at risk of deficit budgets to ensure there are clear improvements by 2017

- Deliver the Education Commissioning Plan so that the needed growth in good quality school places is delivered on time for September 2016, there is improved parental choice, and planned improvements for September 2017 are on target
- Ensure there are sufficient high quality free places for two year olds, yet more good Early Years settings achieving positives outcomes, more children are well developed to start school and there is better integration of the work of Children's Centres, Early Years settings and schools
- Promote more innovative and creative ways to deliver learning for the 21st century, including support for the delivery of the new National Curriculum and new vocational, GCSE and 'A Level curriculum pathways'
- Deliver the Improving Outcomes Strategy to ensure all schools requiring improvement become good and outstanding schools within the next 18 months and there are no Somerset schools providing an inadequate quality of education
- Work with outstanding and good schools to increase their capacity to sponsor and improve schools requiring improvement, through academy, federation, trust, executive headship or other structural arrangements
- Continue to support and develop more effective school to school support through the three Somerset associations of Headteachers, and a new leadership strategy, so that there are fewer schools requiring improvement
- Champion school leadership which is most effective in improving teaching and learning and accelerating pupil progress, and provide leadership development opportunities which increase capacity in Somerset to improve and transform the education system through programmes such as the Future Leaders programme
- Develop SSE as a successful trading organisation delivering good value support services to schools at competitive cost



**To ensure all pupils meet their full potential, working in close partnership with schools and settings, we aim to achieve the following by 2020:**

- Reduce the free school meal (FSM) achievement gap in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- We aim to ensure 76% of eligible two year olds will be taking up a free nursery place by 2017
- Key Stage 1 attainment will be amongst the best of our statistical neighbours
- Key Stage 2 attainment at Level 4 and progress rates for reading, writing and mathematics will be amongst the best of our statistical neighbours
- Key Stage 4 attainment will continue to improve and become amongst the best of our statistical neighbours
- The FSM achievement gaps at Key Stages 2 and 4 will reduce from the 2014/15 baseline, and be less than the national gap figures for pupils from low income backgrounds
- The achievement gaps for children looked after (CLA) at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 will reduce to bring Somerset in line with statistical neighbours in 2017 and by 2020 we expect these to be have narrowed sufficiently for Somerset to be amongst the best of our statistical neighbours
- The achievement gaps for Special Educational Needs (SEN) at Key Stage 2 and GCSE will reduce to bring Somerset in line with statistical neighbours in 2017 and by 2020 we expect these to be have narrowed sufficiently for Somerset to be amongst the best of our statistical neighbours
- We will reduce the number of Somerset schools in an Ofsted category of concern year by year, so that by 2020 no schools will be in this category
- There will be an increase in the number of 'outstanding' schools
- By 2020, all primary and secondary schools will be performing above the floor standard
- By 2020, teaching will be consistently good in 90% of schools
- By 2017, we will reduce the number of Somerset's children who are placed in independent and non-maintained special school placements
- We will continue to help more parents access a preferred school place for their child by increasing the number of online admission applications and increase the number of parents who get their first preference secondary school

- We will aim to increase our surplus capacity in school places and ensure we deliver additional school places in line with demand and parental preferences, each year, as set out in the Education Commissioning Plan to 2020

**To improve outcomes for 16-19 year olds and shape education and skills around the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century we will work with our partners to achieve the following by 2020:**

- By 2017, we aim to ensure there will be no more than 3% of young people aged 16-18 who are not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET) and there will be full participation in education and work based training for all 16-18 year olds following year on year reductions in the NEET figures by 2019



- The employability skills of 19 year olds will have improved, especially in English and mathematics, so that Level 2 attainment at age 19 is well above the national average
- By 2020, we expect there will be fewer young people who achieve no improvement in qualifications between the ages of 16 and 19
- We aim to improve the outcomes at Level 3 for 19 year olds
- The Level 3 achievement gap for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds is a priority for improvement. We aim to ensure this will be better than the national average and the gap between this group and other students will have reduced significantly
- The uptake of Level 2 and 3 vocational training in skills shortage areas will increase
- Performance in vocational qualifications post-16 should also improve more rapidly and the gap between Somerset's results and the national average should narrow progressively each year between now and 2020
- The Somerset Apprenticeship scheme will continue to increase the number of apprentices each year. By 2017 we aim to ensure the number of apprenticeships for 16-18 year olds increases and for success rates for completion improve
- By 2020 we aim to ensure most schools will have provided one or more apprenticeships which have been taken up successfully by young people

- There will be a significant impact on unemployment among 18-24 year olds so that current levels reduce, particularly in more rural areas
- By 2020, the number of assisted employment opportunities for vulnerable learners with learning difficulties and disabilities will increase to meet demand
- We expect to see steady improvement in A Level performance in Somerset above the national average on all measures by 2020. We aim to ensure performance at 2 and 3 passes will be above the national average by 2017
- All young people aged 16 to 19 will be tracked by the LA working in partnership with schools and colleges so that their participation can be monitored, as required by statutory duty and participation rates improve year on year
- By 2017, each district in Somerset will have effective partnership working for 14-19 year olds, involving SCC, schools, colleges, work based learning providers, employers and other agencies, with a local district employability and skills offer

**Through Early Help and Preventative Services, we aim to ensure we achieve the following by 2017 and beyond:**

- We will contribute to the reduction of re-offending by young people and ensure more young offenders aged 16 and 17 engage in learning or employment with training
- We will increase the number of early help assessed and supported children to achieve positive outcomes
- We will reduce the percentage of young people in vulnerable groups who are not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET)
- We will improve the attendance of vulnerable children and young people and ensure no children or young people are missing out on education
- By 2017, the rate of fixed term exclusions of looked after children and young people, will reduce significantly. Fewer than 10% will be persistently absent and their attainment will improve year on year from the 2015 baseline, and be above the national average. The achievement gaps at key stages 2 and 4 will be less than the national gaps
- By 2017 permanent exclusions will have started to reduce



- By 2016/17, all young people attending a PRU will have achieved qualifications at age 16 including English and mathematics, and will have a positive learning or training destination at ages 16 and 17
- By 2016/17 all Children Missing Education will be identified, tracked and monitored, and at least 70% of all new children referred who are found will be offered suitable education provision within 30 days

## Getting There

In order to bring about these improvements, we will put most of our effort into delivering and embedding well thought out strategies which deliver systematic and sharply focused work by:

- Being a better commissioner of services, especially in relation to services that support vulnerable children and young people and in relation to expanding educational provision in early years, schools, and for pupils aged 14-25 with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), so that we meet demand with good and more cost effective provision
- Developing locality based working so that there is more co-ordinated and integrated work between schools, Early Years settings, education services, health, social care and other partners to ensure we improve resilience, reduce levels of need and achieve better outcomes
- Supporting families' enhanced involvement in their children's learning, starting in the earliest years and continuing throughout their child's education
- Developing ways to give children, young people and their families a greater say in the services that affect them and designing and implementing new ways of working that enable greater co-production with parents
- Providing a range of quality information and advice for pupils and their parents so that they can make more informed choices
- Providing high quality performance data at school, locality and county levels, and more insightful analyses and intelligence gathering to focus improvement sharply and identify and learn from rapidly improving trends
- Focusing on improvement and innovation in teaching and learning so that satisfactory teaching improves to good very quickly and good teaching is securely good with opportunities for outstanding experiences for all children and young people
- Recognising the best Early Years providers, schools, teachers and school leaders and using them effectively across the system to develop and disseminate best practice

- Encouraging and promoting more effective school partnerships and collaboration, and partnership working with teaching schools, academy sponsors, employers, health commissioners and providers and other key stakeholders, to build capacity for system wide improvements in Somerset
- Working in close co-operation with The Somerset Education Partnership Board (previously The Compact), the phase associations of Headteachers, teaching school alliances, and Somerset National, Local and Specialist Leaders of Education to support school improvement in a coordinated way across the county
- Recognising the challenges for governors and supporting them to carry out their role effectively, be more informed about best practice, use data constructively to plan for improvements in their schools and keep the performance of the school under review, taking prompt action where necessary

A key means of getting there is to continue to support and promote self-improvement through a school-to-school support system, effective leadership, and maximising the use existing good capacity in Somerset. System leaders build partnerships of support that focus effort and energy in the same direction to ensure improvement is sustained and the pace of change increases. In world-class systems 'poor to fair' schools become good schools quickly and performance gains are significant in a short time because the influence of the best performing schools is effectively spread around the system.

A more effective and longer term sustainable strategy for school improvement and developments in teaching quality and leadership capacity requires these kinds of collaboration within and between schools, and it is a key role for the local authority to support and facilitate this way of working.

To achieve our goals and the better outcomes set out in this document we rely on developing and working in more successful partnerships with schools and settings, colleges and training providers, employers, the third sector, social care, health and the police. Toolkits to support the delivery of these targets will be produced in the next few months.

These ambitious improvements in children and young people's educational outcomes and employability, in the quality of Somerset's schools, Early Years providers and post-16 learning and skills providers and in our early help services are supported by detailed service plans with year-on-year milestones and performance measures.

# Section 2: Our Provision

## Commissioning Education Provision

### Somerset School Population – Key Trends

#### Primary aged pupils (Reception to year 6)

The school population of primary aged pupils in Somerset has been rising since 2010/11 and reached 40,282 in October 2015. Over that period pupil numbers increased by 3,501 a rise of 9.5%. The primary school population is forecast to peak at 41,213 in 2018/19 academic year (a 2.3% increase on 2015/16).

After 2018/19 primary aged pupil numbers are forecast to show a slight drop during the forecast period due to reducing birth figures. By 2020 the primary school population is forecast at 40,878.

The past increase in the birth rate is evidenced by the number of reception year pupils in Somerset which has increased from 4,848 in 2006/07 to 5,952 in 2015/16 – an increase of 22.8%. The year on year rise in reception year pupils has increased the number of KS1 pupils from 15,253 in 2006/07 to 17,713 in 2015/16. The increases at KS1 are now virtually at an end with KS2 now forecast to see the more significant increases – an increase of 1,536 pupils from 2015/16 to 2019/20.



#### Secondary aged pupils

The secondary school population in Somerset for year groups 7 to 11 has been falling since 2003/04 and stood at 24,874 in October 2015. It is forecast to see a modest rise in 2016/17 as a result of increases in the birth rate since 2002, and is forecast to continue rising, reaching 28,566 by 2023/24 - an increase of 3,692 (14.8%) on the 2015 population.

When students in school 6th forms are included the total secondary population stands at 26,954 in 2015 to 30,669 in 2023/24, an increase of 3,715 (13.8%) on the 2015 population.

## **All Mainstream Pupils**

The total roll of Somerset primary and secondary school pupils underwent a fall of 4,872 pupils between 2003/04 and 2010/11. Since then numbers have been on a generally rising trend and are now 1,466 above the number in 2010/11. Total pupil numbers in 2020/21 are forecast to be 69,957 – an increase of 2,721 above the 2015 number on roll total, an increase of 4.0%.

## **Migration**

Net pupil migration across Somerset schools adds around 200 primary age pupils per year to the total roll. At secondary level there are typically far fewer net gains – usually less than 25 secondary aged pupils per year and in some years a net loss. It should be noted that these are average figures and individual years can see substantially more or fewer gains. (The forecast data accounts for gains from migration at around the long term average rate). When looking at the local authority total roll, changes from migration are less significant than those which result from changes to the birth rate.

## **Individual planning areas**

The above data refers to the trend at county level, but within individual areas there is some diversion from the overall Somerset pattern. The most significant increases in pupil numbers at primary level have been in and around the town areas of Bridgwater, Taunton and Yeovil. These areas are now forecast to see the most significant increases at secondary level as larger year groups reach year 7. Conversely some of the more rural areas have shown little by way of increase during the period of rising primary aged pupils, and for some of these areas, the forecasts show at best a stable number of pupils, and in some areas a small forecast fall in primary aged pupil numbers.

## **Special schools**

Pupils attending Somerset special schools and PRUs are not included in the data above for primary or secondary aged pupils. The number of pupils attending state-funded special schools in Somerset has jumped quite dramatically in recent years. In October 2013 there were 458 pupils registered at Somerset special schools, a figure which increased to 563 in October 2015 – an increase of 105 pupils 22.9%. This is only due in small part to the opening of the Mendip Free School which at October 2015 had a roll of 20 pupils.

## **Surplus Places**

The current surplus capacity for primary year groups across Somerset is 2.85% in urban areas and 7.56% in rural areas (February 2016), which is an average of 4.97%. Good practice is to aim to maintain at least 5% to 7% surplus capacity in school places and ensure we deliver additional school places in line with demand and parental preferences. In urban areas the low level of surplus is a concern but this is being addressed by the new schools planned in Bridgwater and Yeovil.

The current surplus capacity for Secondary year groups is 15.37% across Somerset (February 2016). It is expected that additional accommodation will be required by 2020/21 in urban areas such as Bridgwater and Taunton and feasibility studies will be commissioned during 2016/17.

## **Progress in 2013-14**

In 2013-14 a new 210 place primary school was opened; six school sites were expanded to provide an additional 450 primary school places, and a further 75 places were added in reception year through bulge classes or bringing teaching spaces back into use.

Over the next three years it is anticipated that two new primary schools will open in Somerset (two in Yeovil and one in Bridgwater); a primary school in Taunton will be expanded and relocated to a new site, to provide an additional 180 places; and ten existing school sites will be expanded, to provide a further 450 primary places.

## **Commissioning Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision**

As of February 2016, Somerset has 8 maintained special schools which provide around 520 places for children aged 4 to 19. The designations of some of these schools have become unclear over time and are likely to be redefined as part of an ongoing review of specialist provision in the county.

Although there is some spare capacity, those places are generally located a significant distance away from where they are needed. Demand for places is likely to increase in line with the local population increases and additional capacity may be required in the larger urban areas.

Somerset has a high number of children who require social emotional and mental health (SEMH) provision and with only 50-60 places available in maintained settings, many of these access education at independent settings.

There are also around 70 places in autism spectrum disorder (ASD) resource bases around the county. Again, this provision needs to be restructured with outline plans to create an additional 50-60 places, although host schools have yet to be identified.

The introduction of this additional capacity alongside a robust special educational needs (SEN) strategy is likely to reduce the number of children requiring SEMH provision in the future.

# Provision for 14-24 Year Olds

The 14 to 24 Strategy for Employment and Skills is designed to support a fundamental shift in the education system in Somerset to include the promotion of a more comprehensive vocational and technical offer for young people aged 14 to 24. The strategy builds on the priorities for the 14 to 24 age range, with a clear focus on meeting the skills needs of the local economy and support for vulnerable adults. The strategy will ensure there is a co-ordinated approach to enable young people and adults to understand and access employment or higher levels of learning opportunities.



It is essential that the work of Somerset schools, colleges, training providers and employers, becomes better integrated and able to respond to the needs of young people, adults and the economy. Facilitating and supporting these developments is a key focus for the Local Authority with regards to Employability and Skills.

The newly appointed post-16 advisor will sit on relevant Economic and Skills groups to ensure that our education strategy remains closely aligned to local needs, that our wider community is fully engaged with the widest range of Employability & Skills initiatives, and that provision and support is not duplicated and complements the work of other agencies.

Somerset is working in collaboration with the Dorset & Somerset Training Provider Network to produce an online prospectus of local post 16 provision which will help learners and parents make informed choices about the local range of post 16 opportunities and how these pathways link to employment. Links to this website will feature on schools and college websites, through an individualised tab, which will also support parent, student and teacher areas of careers education, information, advice and guidance.

Impartial Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) is critical to the successful and prolonged engagement of our learners and the newly formed Somerset CEIAG Advisor Network Group will be the conduit for local and national labour market Information, IAG support materials, the development of employer engagement works and supporting students who are at high risk of not progressing post 16.

A Somerset Ambitions CEIAG Framework will be rolled out across the county that acknowledges the latest CDI Framework and the Gatsby Benchmarks and the Local

Authority will encourage and support our schools and colleges to gain recognised CEIAG Charter Standards over the next three years.

Programmes of aspirational events and workshops, which include direct and sustained involvement with employers, will be rolled out across Somerset from April 2016, through themed industry months that link closely to Somerset skills needs. Construction, engineering, digital industries and health and social care will be the first sectors promoted.

Somerset CC will be joining with Devon CC and the HotSW LEP to deliver a joint Careers Enterprise Project from March 2016 – August 2017. Enterprise Advisors and Co-ordinators will work in thirteen schools across Somerset to bring groups of employers together to work with schools and young people, ultimately, driving systemic change in the way that schools and businesses interact. Activities will include staff CPD, work experience, promotion of STEM subjects and the development of careers based resources. It will be crucial that the best practice and information gathered through this opportunity is spread across our other institutions and this will happen via the county CEIAG Advisor Network meetings.

An online post-16 Early Leaver portal is being introduced which will enable the Local Authority to have a clear and real time picture of those learners who are in imminent danger of becoming disengaged from education, training or employment, and will be focusing on bringing together a network of practitioners to help track, monitor and support re-engagement back in to learning, apprenticeships or employment with training.

Somerset Further Education (FE) Colleges will be going through the FE Area Review process in November 2016 and the Local Authority intends to take an active role, to support our colleges through the process and to ensure that an effective curriculum offer remains in place for our learners which takes account of the wider environment including transport and the needs of our local economy.

## **Apprenticeships and Improving Vocational and Technical Education**

There is still a lack of clear progression pathway information, 14 to 19, for technical and vocational qualifications, especially for our most vulnerable learners. The mismatch between some of the courses available and the needs of local business are priorities for the 14 to 24 Employment and Skills strategy. Ensuring that institutions, learners and parents/carers are aware of our local offer is critical to this.



A number of schools and colleges have begun to embrace the freedoms and flexibilities with the post-16 programmes of study and new qualification reforms and different routes are being explored with our colleges. Case studies will be shared on

innovative and collaborative approaches to 14 to 19 provision and work continues with individual schools and colleges, in liaison with our teaching schools, to develop and communicate robust 14 to 19 pathways, which lead to sustainable employment.

Somerset continues to perform well in increasing apprenticeship numbers. The number of apprenticeships in Somerset is growing, across all ages and levels there was an increase of 700 in the academic year 2014/15 compared to 2013/14. All levels of apprenticeship show growth with Advanced Apprenticeships and Higher Level Apprenticeships (HLA) increasing the most. Somerset had the third highest number of HLA starts in the South West in 2014/15 behind Cornwall and Devon. More HLA frameworks and standards are becoming available and the trend shows that take up is increasing.



Filling apprenticeship vacancies remains a challenge. As of February 2016 there are 106 live unfilled apprenticeship vacancies in Somerset and colleges and providers are reporting a problem in filling these apprenticeships, for which a solution is required. Changes in funding and delivery could impact on apprenticeship numbers in the future and IAG will become even more important to help avoid this.

The Local Authority acknowledges the difficulties in recruiting and keeping teachers in Somerset and will be working with our Teaching Schools to develop a Teaching Academy programme that intends to promote the teaching profession to learners from year 10 onwards and which will lead into teaching placements, apprenticeships and qualifications.

## Targeted Support for Vulnerable Learners

An employment pilot is being introduced with our four area PRU schools (Area Partnerships) to develop employability and life skills, organise work related learning opportunities, promote careers and guidance with learners and parents/carers and involve employers in mentoring and coaching schemes.



It is acknowledged that transition into post-16 for these young people can be especially difficult and programmes to support this work are being coordinated and supported by our four Area Partnerships. This will include the timely sharing of RONI (Risk of NEET Indicator) data and SIMS based transition information between institutions so post-16 providers have the comprehensive and reliable information that will enable them to support each learner's transition and progress in learning.

Following successful initiatives led by the Bridgwater Education Trust (BET) and in liaison with employer and industry ambassador groups it is the intention to roll out mentoring and coaching initiatives across our Area Partnerships to those requiring additional support for successful transition.

Currently in Somerset many of our learners who receive high needs funding are not accessing mainstream post-16 further education (FE) education opportunities, with a variable and patchy take up across the county. This may be down, in part, to a lack of understanding of the opportunities available and how these can link into future employment. CEIAG materials, information and activities will be focussed on raising awareness and the aspiration of learners and parents/carers.

SCC is working in partnership with local colleges and employers on an initiative called Project SEARCH, a one-year programme which aims to give young people with Learning Disabilities the skills to obtain competitive paid employment. The SCC 'Adults' Learning Disability Team' and supported employment team have supported the internships with job coaches and licence funding. Our colleges are developing internship programmes across Somerset, following very successful pilot projects.

## **Care Leavers**

The Leaving Care Team ensure the 16 plus Personal Education Plan (16+ PEP) is maintained for care leavers who remain in education beyond statutory school leaving age, ie for Years 12 and 13. It may be continued after that, if thought useful by the young person, until the conclusion of their education. The plans for all care leavers who are not in education, training or employment are proactively tracked, with partner agencies, in order to agree focussed interventions aimed at improving their employability and opportunities for engagement. Young people may need intensive work to stabilise their situations, to motivate them or to prepare them for the world of study or work. The young person's identified potential, achievements, attitudes to education, training and employment and ambitions are taken into account and the steps to help them to reach their potential, and who will take what action and when, are recorded in the young person's Pathway Plan and monitored until they have been stabilised on a clear career path.

Financial support is available from Somerset County Council Leaving Care Service for career development and all care leavers pursuing a programme of education or training, are supported by a personal advisor and specialist teams, such as the Targeted Youth Support team, as appropriate to their needs. The extent of practical and financial assistance provided depends on the assessment of their needs and will reflect the type of course, whether it is full or part time and the young person's existing income. The definition of a programme of education or training will be broad and might include; completion of a basic skills course, or a course of further

education or higher education; postgraduate study or participation in vocational training and apprenticeships.

Support can be available for as long as the young person continues on the agreed education or training programme, even if this goes beyond their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Somerset's performance for the percentage of care leavers in education, employment or training (EET) at the end of March 2015, was 46%, slightly better than our statistical neighbour average of 44.8%.

Somerset's performance for the percentage of care leavers **not** in education, employment or training (NEET) at the end of March 2015 remained at 49% for the second year. This places Somerset as the lowest performing Local Authority (LA) among our statistical neighbours, and in the lowest 15% of LAs nationally.

Only 2% of Somerset's care leavers were in higher education at the end of March 2015, compared to 6.5% in statistical neighbour authorities and 6% nationally.

## Early Help and Prevention

Our Early Help Charter defines early help as everyone's responsibility; we want children, families, communities and agencies to work together so that families are assisted to help themselves and are supported as soon as a need arises, thereby improving the overall wellbeing and quality of life of all Somerset's children, young people and their families.

The Early Help Charter is not about creating new structures or services, but establishing a cohesive, collaborative Early Help offer delivered jointly by all partners and a commitment to providing the right service in the right place at the right time by:

- Working better together and in an honest way with the consent of the child and their family
- Identifying strengths and needs and finding practical and achievable solutions
- Providing the right information and advice to enable choice for families so they can be empowered to make positive changes themselves with tailored support
- Helping families build protective factors and family resilience to prevent situations escalating or recurring

We want to ensure that children, young people and families receive the right services in the right place at the right time, so that issues in families are tackled quickly and effectively. We know this provides better long term outcomes for children and young people. Our multi-agency early help strategy and action plan will see all agencies taking an active role in early help as everyone's business.

We see the early years and education sector as integral to delivering our early help strategy and have been running four pilots with Community Learning Partnerships (CLPs) of schools, to test a model framework for delivering early help. We are also

reviewing the role of children's centre services within an integrated early help and public health nursing offer.

Our new early help outcomes framework builds on the success of our troubled families programme and will be rolled out across the children's services workforce.

## **Keeping Children Safe in Education**

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) monitors and tracks Children Missing Education (CME), including those not attending and those out of school on lengthy part-time timetables. EWS monitors schools' use of coding pupils' attendance and challenge the use of inappropriate codes, for instance those that may mask 'informal' exclusions, where pupils are sent home.

EWS use their statutory powers as a last resort to hold to account parents who don't or won't engage with support.

The EWS is supporting the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) panels by bringing CME intelligence to the discussion, and ensure an early alert to schools when Police have made visits to a home around domestic incidents.

The service is reviewing its resources to enable the EWS to better support groups of schools to tackle attendance/CME issues, and continue its liaison meetings with individual schools.

A particular focus is ensuring that schools do not promote Elective Home Education (EHE). Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) are now visiting all initial requests for EHE, to ensure parents are making the decision to educate their child at home for the right reasons, eg not because of frustrations with the school's support for their child.

## **Troubled Families**

The Somerset Troubled Families Programme, in collaboration with District Councils, met the Phase 1 target of 'turning around' 870 families with multiple problems. Many more families received support from the programme. The programme has been successful in helping adults to access work or training; in reducing youth offending and anti-social behaviour; and improving children's attendance at school, with fewer exclusions.

Building on the success of the first programme, Somerset began the 'Expanded Troubled Families' programme' as an early adopter in January 2015. The vision of the expanded programme is to help an additional 2970 families in Somerset achieve significant and sustainable outcomes, over the five years of the programme. Service transformation has been embraced, with the Troubled Families 'way of working' becoming business as usual for many partners, and embedded in the SCC early help, 'getset' service, which allows for more dynamic case allocation, consistency across the county and sustainability.

To be eligible for the programme, families must meet at least two of six headline clusters of measures, ranging from the original measures of 'worklessness', 'educational absences', 'exclusions' and 'anti-social behaviour', and extending into domestic abuse, mental health and children needing help. In Somerset we have already identified 5544 families who are eligible for the programme, 50% of whom have been identified via their 'troubled' education:

- Has been subject to permanent exclusion
- Three or more fixed term exclusions across the last 3 consecutive terms
- Is in a Pupil Referral Unit or alternative provision
- The child or young person is not on a school roll or is at risk of not receiving a suitable full time education
- A child has had 15% unauthorised or authorised absences or more from school/College across the last 3 consecutive terms

Somerset's Early Help services (including 'getset' and the Youth Offending Team (YOT)), have already engaged with 671 families in the first year of the expanded programme, of which 296 families have met the education headline cluster.

This new way of working is already reaping the benefits in terms of business intelligence. We are sharing data with housing associations, police colleagues and Job Centre Plus allowing us to prioritise families needing the most help, who impact on wider public services. These high complexity / high cost families are identified to operational colleagues working in the level 3 'getset' services who add their local intelligence and proactively offer support.

## Youth Offending

The ambition of Somerset's Youth Justice Service is to reduce re-offending and to help young offenders to achieve positive outcomes.

The key indicators by which we measure our performance are:

- The numbers of 'first time entrants' to the criminal justice system which we aim to reduce
- The use of custodial remands and sentences, which we aim to reduce
- The rate of proven re-offending by young offenders, which we aim to reduce
- The level of engagement of young offenders in education, training and employment, which we aim to increase

In recent years, performance has been strong in three areas:

- There has been a steady reduction in the number of first time entrants (from 911 in 2011, to 450 in 2014)
- The use of custody has continued to reduce to the point where it is a rare occurrence. There have only been 2 custodial sentences imposed in the past year, both for grave crimes. Comparative data for 2014 placed Somerset in the highest performing quartile nationally

- The reoffending rate decreased from 38.52 in 2010 to 34.06 in 2013, better than the national average of 37.95. Most Local Authority areas saw an increase over the same period

The engagement of statutory school age young offenders in full time education has improved, but remains an area of performance which the local Board is monitoring closely.

Somerset's Youth Justice Plan for 2015-16, sets out the service priorities and developments aimed at further improving outcomes for young offenders. Priorities include:

- Working with criminal justice partners to continue the downward trend in first time entrants
- Maintaining courts' confidence in our ability to manage all but the most serious offenders in the community
- Increasing the engagement of young offenders in education, training and employment by working with the targeted Youth Support Service, partner agencies and their seconded staff to address the barriers to engagement of our most challenging young offenders
- Developing a response to the changing pattern of youth offences and offenders, particularly in relation to the rise in reported sexual offences and the increasing level of vulnerabilities displayed by young offenders, including poor mental health and risks of exploitation
- Managing the overall reduction in resources in a way that sustains effective delivery of key outcomes

## Prevent

Somerset County Council is committed to ensuring that our services give due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into all forms of terrorist or extremist related activities, including domestic extremism and non-violent extremism. We are ensuring that staff and services are able to respond to the ideological challenge and the threat we face from those who promote it.

We do this by identifying and targeting support on those who may be vulnerable, reducing exploitation and susceptibility to radicalisation and incorporating the duty into our existing policies and procedures including HR, decision making, procurement and internet safety.

In our two-tier structure, it is the County Council that is leading strategically on this agenda, working hard to ensure that local partners, also given responsibility under the Counter terrorism and Security Act (2015), have access to training and awareness and are able to embed the Duty effectively.

We continue to support all educational establishments in gaining the essential awareness of Prevent and offer training and ongoing support with referrals. To date, we have trained staff in excess of 240 schools across Somerset with the aim of having trained the staff in all schools trained by March 2016. The focus is now on training Early Years settings and internal council front line staff. To help with this

mammoth task, an e-learning tool has been created to increase access to, and uptake of training. In addition, there is a multi-agency Toolkit, designed to guide colleagues through the prevent duty and steps to embed it in the various settings. A range of other materials and guides are also available – particularly for schools.

We are active participants in the Somerset Prevent Board which includes representatives for education and will fully engage with the Channel programme (designed to safeguard those individuals who may be vulnerable to being drawn into any form of terrorist or extremist related activities) by assessing the risk and agreeing interventions and support plans.

# Section 3: Performance

## Attainment in 2014/15

### The Early Years Foundation Stage

The main overall indicator for children at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) changed in 2013, and is now the 'percentage of children achieving a Good Level of Development' (GLD). The measure is: achieving or exceeding expected levels in all 'Prime Learning Goals' (including literacy and mathematics).

In Somerset the three year improving trend continued in 2015, with 66.6% of children achieving a GLD, a 5.2% improvement from 2014.

National averages improved at a greater rate, meaning little change in Somerset's position since 2014, remaining just below our statistical neighbour average of 67.31 and just above the national average of 66.3%.

Performance has improved in all five district areas over the last three years but in 2015, fewer than half the children in West Somerset achieved a GLD.

Girls continue to out-perform boys with 73.3% of girls, and 60.2% of boys achieving a GLD. Somerset's 13.1% gap is narrower than the South West (15.7%) and national (15.6%) averages.



# Key Stage 1

At Key Stage 1 there was continued improvement in reading and mathematics in 2015, but a decline at level 3 and above in reading.

Attainment in **reading** at Key Stage 1 Level 2b has not improved on the 91% in 2014, but is slightly above national average and in line with our statistical neighbour average.

At level 3 and above in **reading** there was a slight decline of 0.7% to 33.2% in 2015. Prior to this year there had been a five-year upward trend. However, Somerset is 1.3% ahead of the national average of 31.9%.

Attainment in **writing** at Key Stage 1 Level 2b was 74.3%, an improvement of 1.5% from 2014, and continues a five-year upward trend. Somerset is 2.2% above the national average of 72.1%.

At level 3 and above in **writing** we have also seen continuous improvement with 18.3% of pupils achieving this level in Writing compared to 17.8% in 2014. Somerset is 0.8% above the national average of 17.5%.

Attainment in **mathematics** at Level 2b improved by 0.6%, with 82.1% of pupils achieving this level in 2015. Somerset is above the national average of 81.6%.

At level 3 and above in **mathematics** there was further improvement of 1.7%, to 26.4% in 2015. Somerset is slightly above national average of 26% in 2015. This reflects a continuing upward trend.



## Key Stage 2

Progress from Key Stage 1 to 2 in all subject areas saw little change in 2015, but most Local Authorities improved their results, hence the gaps between Somerset and our highest performing Statistical Neighbours have widened.

Pupils making the expected 2 levels of progress in **reading** between KS1 and KS2 in Somerset is 90% in 2015, the same as 2014. The national average is 91% for two levels of progress. Somerset is in the lowest performing quartile nationally, ranked 111. The highest performing statistical neighbour is Devon at 93% (second upper quartile nationally).

Pupils making the expected 2 levels of progress in **writing** improved by 1% to 94% in 2015, the same as the national average, and in line with our statistical neighbour average of 93.9. However, for writing, Somerset is in the lowest performing quartile nationally, ranked 90. The highest performing statistical neighbours are Devon and East Sussex at 96% (second upper quartile nationally).

Pupils making the expected 2 levels of progress in **mathematics** has declined by 1% to 88%. The national average is 90% and our statistical neighbour average 88.8%.

Again placing Somerset in the lowest performing quartile nationally, ranked 115. The highest performing statistical neighbour is Herefordshire at 92% (second upper quartile nationally).

At Level 4 and above in **reading, writing and mathematics**, attainment has remained the same as 2014, at 78%, below the national average of 80%, and our statistical neighbour average of 79.4%. Somerset remains one of the lowest performing Local Authorities in the country. The gap between Somerset and the highest performing statistical neighbour, Devon, has widened to 4%, with Devon achieving 82% (second upper quartile nationally).

At Level 5 and above, in **reading, writing and mathematics**, attainment also remained static at 22.2%. In 2013 Somerset was in line with the national average at 20.9%. Since then the national average has increased by 3%, placing Somerset 1.8% below national average in 2015. The difference between Somerset and the highest performing statistical neighbour has remained at 5%. However more Local Authorities have performed at similar higher rates and therefore Somerset is now joint 10th with East Sussex and Suffolk against the 11 statistical neighbours. Again this is disappointing.

At Level 4 and above attainment in **reading** improved by 1% to 89%, slightly lower than the national average of 90% and statistical neighbour average 89.6%.

At Level 5 and above, attainment in **reading** declined by 2.4% to 48.2%, following a significant improvement of 4.2% in 2014. This is clearly disappointing although this drop in 2015 is in line with a fall of 2% in the national level 5+ figure in reading.

At Levels 4 and 5 and above, attainment in **writing** improved by 1.6% and 1.7% respectively. In Somerset writing is now at 87% for Level 4+ and at Level 5+ is at 36.1% which is in line with our statistical neighbours and national averages.

At Level 4 and above, attainment in **mathematics** has improved by a very small 0.1% to 85.3%. Somerset's performance has plateaued since 2012, when 85% placed us as the second highest performing LA of the 11 statistical neighbours and 1% higher than the national average. Somerset is now one of the lowest performing LAs in the country, ranked 122. The gap between Somerset and the four highest performing statistical neighbours is 3% for the second year running.

At Level 5 and above, attainment in **mathematics** declined by 0.7% to 38.5%, compared to 42% nationally and 40.3% statistical neighbour average. Again, performance has plateaued since 2012 at around 38%, meaning Somerset has declined from being one of the highest performing of its statistical neighbours in 2012, to one of the lowest. The gap between Somerset and our highest performing statistical neighbour, Devon, is nearly 5%.



## The Floor Standard at Key Stage 2

Only 7 schools were below the attainment floor standard at Key Stage 2 in 2015 where 65% or more of their pupils achieved the expected Level 4 and above in reading, writing and mathematics combined.

This is a significant improvement against the 2014 figure of 17. It may be that when we have the progress data for individual schools more will be above the floor standard.

## Key Stage 4

Key Stage 4 in 2015 Somerset's performance at **5 or more GCSE A\* to C grades including English and mathematics** was 58.6%. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> best progress in England, and puts us in the second upper quartile nationally, and, for the first time, Somerset is performing better than statistical neighbours (56.47%) and all England averages (52.8%).

Attainment of **5 or more A\* to G GCSEs including English and mathematics**, was 92.6%, an improvement of 1.8% from 2014. This is slightly higher than the statistical neighbour average of 92.31% and significantly higher than the national average of 85.1%, ranking Somerset 49<sup>th</sup> nationally, (second upper quartile).

- 17 (55%) secondary schools improved or maintained their GCSE performance in 2015
- 7 schools improved by more than 10%
- 6 schools declined by at least 5%



Somerset's **expected rates of progress** at Key Stage 4 (three levels of progress between key stages 2 and 4) for **English** have improved by 2.8% to 72.7%, better than the statistical neighbour average of 70.68% and national average of 70%. Somerset is ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> of its statistical neighbours and 50<sup>th</sup> nationally (second upper quartile).

Somerset's **expected rates of progress** at Key Stage 4 (three levels of progress between key stages 2 and 4) for **mathematics** have made a significant improvement of 6% to 68.9%. Somerset is now in line with the statistical neighbour average of 68.81% and national average of 68.6%. Somerset is ranked 4<sup>th</sup> of its statistical neighbours and 50<sup>th</sup> nationally (second upper quartile).

## The Floor Standard at Key Stage 4

In 2014 there were three schools below the Department for Education's (DfE) floor standard of 40% A\* to C including English and mathematics. In 2015 one school was below the floor standard.

As well as the measure of 5+ A\* to C GCSEs, including English and mathematics, the DfE floor standards at KS4 include the progress of pupils from KS2 to KS4 in English and in mathematics. Provisional data for Somerset indicates that only one secondary school will be below all three floor standard measures.

There are eighteen converter academies within Somerset, four of which are sponsored.

- Eight out of the 18 showed a decline in their performance against the 5 A\* to C including English and Mathematics in 2015, some of this decline was slight or moderate, ie below 2%
- Six of the 18 are showing decline since becoming academies

Overall, converter academies achieved 63% A\* to C including English and Mathematics. This is 5% above the Somerset average of 58%. This is good, but important to note that these schools converted because they were good or outstanding and one would expect a better profile than that of all Somerset schools.

## A level Results

The percentage of students achieving two or more A level passes decreased to 90.8%, compared to 93% in 2014. 3+ AAB grades have increased from 12.0% in 2014 to 12.1% in 2015. (Please note this does not include one college's data).

Somerset's Average Points Score per entry has seen a slight decline of 0.5% to 214.7%. This is in line with the national average and 2.87% higher than statistical neighbour average.

The Average Points Score per student declined by 27.5 points to 676, compared to statistical neighbours' average of 684.74, the lowest score in ten years. Somerset is ranked 6<sup>th</sup> out of our 11 statistical neighbours. However, most Local Authorities saw a decline in this score, and Somerset is still in the second upper quartile nationally.



# Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) Figures and Youth Unemployment

The Years 12-14 NEET figure for January 2016 is 4.1%, which is slightly lower than last year's 4.3%. These figures are slightly less than the national average (4.2%) and in line with the South West average (also 4.1%). The NEET figure should always be used in conjunction with the Not Known figures. From 2015 to 2016 the Somerset Year 12–14 Not Known figure has decreased from 5.7% to 5.3%, which is still well below the South West and National averages which are both currently standing at 8.3% (DfE December 2015). Within this the Year 14 Not Known figure at January 2016 of 7.6% is well below the National 16% and South West 15.9% figures.

At Year 12 the January 2016 NEET figure is 1.6% the same as last year (National 2%, SW 1.3%), at Year 13 the NEET figure is also the same as last year, currently 3.9% (National 3.9%, SW 3.6%), but the biggest positive difference is at Year 14 where the January 2016 NEET figure is 6.6% (National 6.9%, SW 7.0%) compared to 7.6% last year. At age 19 NEETs for January 2016 stand at 13.2% compared to 16.5% last year.

The profile of the NEET cohort in January 2016 shows that 700 young people are NEET, with 454 identified as ready for placing and 246 within a vulnerable group / not work ready. Joint working between different departments and institutions aims to reduce the number of NEETs especially within the vulnerable groups. The increased use of reliable data sets to provide more targeted interventions is being organised. This work will continue to reduce NEETs to, at most, 3% by January 2017.

The current 'Raising of the Participation Age' contract is being reviewed, renewed and adapted to include a more robust system of tracking and support, including the possible inclusion of new resources such as UCAS Progress. This will enable the Local Authority to have a clearer, real time picture of September Guarantee student placements and information relating to choice of courses and progression post 18.

Currently only 22% of early leavers / unengaged are contacted and supported to re-engage and the average time of being NEET is 280 days. The Local Authority target is to have made meaningful contact with all early leavers within two weeks of their leaving date and to half the average time of being NEET by 2017.

The Somerset Employment Programme is being developed and introduced. This programme will work directly with 17 to 24 year olds who have been NEET or unemployed for three months or more with an aim to engage them on courses, traineeships and apprenticeships. The Local Authority will liaise closely with Job Centre Plus and other agencies to ensure a co-ordinated and streamlined approach to support and reengagement.

Timely and accurate data is key to this work and data sharing protocols and agreements will be introduced to guarantee that information is shared effectively and within legal guidelines.

Since last year unemployment for 16 to 24 year olds in Somerset has continued to fall. In September 2015 unemployment for this age group was 11.3%, compared to 14% in 2014. This compares to a National figure of 17.5% in September 2014 and 15.2% in September 2015. This unemployment rate assesses the number of jobless people who want to work, are available to work and are actively seeking employment.

However, youth unemployment nationally is 3.5 times higher than adult unemployment with employers reporting that, in their opinion, only 53% of 16 year olds are being well prepared for work (compared to 60% at 17, 72% by age of 18 and 81% of graduate leavers. A lack of Work Experience skills is the greatest inhibiting factor at 25% followed by a poor attitude (21%), with a lack of literacy and numeracy skills only being 4% and a poor education record being 3%. This is attributed to the big reduction in 16-17 year olds having part time work (43% of females and 34% of males in 1999 to 23% of females and 13% of males in 2014). The Local Authority will focus on preparing year 12 learners in their transition to post -16 education, employment or training, through the promotion of a robust framework and programme of CEIAG that includes Work Experience and life skills development.

# Gender Differences

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, girls continue to out-perform boys with 73.3% of girls, and 60.2% of boys achieving a 'Good Level of Development' in 2015, a gap of 13.1%. The gap varies from 3.3% to 14.3% across Key Stages and subjects. Higher level attainment in mathematics, is the only area where the boys out-perform the girls at Key Stage 1 and 2.

## Key Stage 1 Gender Differences

At Key Stage 1, **girls'** attainment at Level 2b and above in **reading** remained at 87%. Level 2b and above attainment in **reading** for boys improved by 1.3% to 79% in 2015. There is currently no national comparator. This means the gap between boys and girls for Level 2b and above in reading has narrowed by 1.3% to 8%, representing good progress for boys.

The attainment of higher achieving **girls** in **reading** declined by 0.5%, to 38.9% achieving Level 3 and above. Higher achieving **boys** in **reading** declined by 0.7% to 27.8% in 2015. At Level 3 and above the reading gap between boys and girls is 11%.

At Key Stage 1, **girls'** attainment in **writing** at Level 2b and above improved by 0.5% to 81.6%. **Boys'** attainment at Level 2b and above in **writing** improved by 2.4% to 67.3%. This is good progress and means the gap between boys and girls at this level has narrowed from 16.2% in 2014, to 14.3% in 2015. There is no national comparator at present.

The attainment of higher achieving **girls** at Level 3 and above in **writing** improved by 0.8% to 24.6%. **Boys'** performance at level 3 and above in **writing** improved by 0.3% to 12.4%. Therefore, the gap has increased to 12.2% and the gender difference between high achieving boys and girls is now almost 100%.

At Key Stage 1, **girls'** attainment in **mathematics** at Level 2b and above, improved by 0.4% to 83.8%. **Boys'** performance improved by 0.8% to 80.5%. The gap has narrowed by 0.4% to 3.3%. Attainment for both boys and girls is showing a good three-year upward trend in mathematics at Level 2b and above.

Attainment for higher achieving girls improved by almost 2.2% to 24.8%. This is good progress. Attainment for higher achieving boys improved by 1.2% to 28%. Mathematics at level 3 and above is the only area where the boys out-perform the girls and the gap is 3.2% towards the boys.

## Key Stage 2 Gender Differences

Whilst girls continue to outperform boys at KS2, the gaps have narrowed because boys' performance has improved slightly on reading, writing and mathematics combined indicators in 2015, whereas girls' performance has largely plateaued or declined.

Nationally 83% of girls achieved the 'expected level' compared to 77% of boys, a 1% increase for both genders. In Somerset, girls' performance remained the same as 2014, but boys' increased by 1.5% to 76.1% in 2015. This is good progress for boys.



At level 4 and above in **reading, writing and mathematics** combined, girls continue to outperform the boys. Attainment for girls remained static at 80.8%. Boys improved their performance by 1.5% on 2014, narrowing the gap to 4.7%. This would be encouraging, but for the fact that girls' performance did not improve in 2015.

At level 5 and above **reading, writing and mathematics** 23.6% of girls and 20.8% of boys achieved. Boys improved their performance by 1.9%, whilst girls' performance declined by 2.1% from 2014.

Girls' attainment in **reading**, at Level 4 and above improved by 1.6% to 91.3%. Boys' performance declined by 0.6% to 86.1%.

Girls' attainment at Level 5 and above in **reading** declined by 1.3% to 52.3%; and for boys declined by 3.3% to 44.3%.

Girls' attainment in **writing** at level 4 and above improved by 1.2% to 91.1%. Boys' improved by 1.8% to 82.8%.

Girls' attainment in **writing** at Level 5 and above remained the same at 43.5%. Boys improved by 3.4% to 28.9%. This is very good progress by the boys.

Girls' attainment in **mathematics** at level 4 and above declined by 0.3% in 2015. Boys improved by 0.3% to 85.9%.

Girls' attainment at Level 5 and above in **mathematics** declined by 2.9% to 33.4%. Boys' performance improved by 1.5% to 43.5% in 2015.

### Key Stage 4 Gender Differences

At Key Stage 4, the gender gap in 2015 has widened by 0.5% to 12%, with 52% of boys and 64% of girls attaining 5 or more GCSE A\* to C grades including English and mathematics.

Girls' performance improved by 0.9% and boys' performance improved by 0.4% compared to 2014. Boys' performance is the same as nationally; girls' performance is 3% higher than the national figure (61%).



# Outcomes for Vulnerable Groups

All attainment gaps at any age are of great significance to the life chances of children as they move through their schooling. Children who fall behind in the earlier years of learning do not often enough catch up sufficiently with their peers. We are determined to narrow these gaps over the next three years.

As we accelerate the rate of progress overall, we need to work even harder to close the considerable gaps between children eligible for free school meals (FSM) and their FSM peers nationally, as well as the gap between FSM and non-FSM children in Somerset. We need a similar additional focus on Children Looked After (CLA), and pupils receiving any level of support for Special Educational Needs (SEN). The attainment of these children continues to be significantly lower in Somerset until Key Stage 4, compared to national averages, and the gaps at Key Stages 1 and 2 are widening. FSM pupils have made progress at Key Stage 4 and the gaps are mainly narrowing.

## Free School Meal (FSM) attainment gaps

In the **Early Years Foundation Stage**, the FSM achievement gap has widened by 4% to 24%. The average gap nationally is 18%. Somerset is in the poorest performing quartile nationally for the percentage of FSM children achieving a Good Level of Development, at just 46% compared to our statistical neighbour average of 47.6% and national average of 51%. With our focus on closing the gap this is disappointing.

The achievement gap between the median score and the mean score of the bottom 20%, was 29%, an improving trend from the 33.6% gap in 2013. This is encouraging and as a result our targets for future narrowing of this gap will be ambitious.

At **Key Stage 1** Level 2b and above, the already significant gap between FSM pupils and their peers has widened in all three subject areas in 2015.

- The gap in **reading** at level 2b and above has widened by 3.4% to 18.5%
- In **writing** it has widened by 1.5% to 20.3%
- In **mathematics** it has widened by 0.9% to 17%

At level 3 and above the gaps in reading and writing have narrowed but widened in mathematics.

At **Key Stage 2** Level 4 and above in **reading, writing and mathematics** (RWM) combined, 64.3% of FSM pupils in Somerset attained this level, an improvement of 0.6%, but a widening of the gap between their non-FSM Somerset peers by 0.5%, to 18.9%.

Somerset remains significantly below the national average of 70% for level 4 and above for **RWM** and Somerset's gap is almost 4% wider than the gap nationally.

The percentage of pupils eligible for FSM who make 2 levels of progress between KS1 and KS2 has improved slightly in **reading and writing**, but declined in **mathematics**. Somerset's FSM pupils' attainment remains lower than that nationally in all subjects.

Pupils eligible for FSM making 2 levels of progress in **reading** from KS1 to KS2 improved by 2% to 86.2%. This is 2.1% lower than the 88.3% nationally. The reading progress gap between FSM students and their non-FSM Somerset peers has narrowed by 3.6%, to -4.6%, but this is largely because attainment of their non-FSM peers declined.

Pupils eligible for FSM making 2 levels of progress in **writing** from KS1 to KS2 improved by 1.3% to 90.9%. This is 1.1% lower than the 92% national average. The writing progress gap between FSM students and their non-FSM Somerset peers has narrowed by 0.8%, to -3.8%, but this is largely because attainment of their non-FSM peers declined.

Pupils eligible for FSM making 2 levels of progress in **mathematics** from KS1 to KS2 declined by 1.7% to 81.4%. This is a significant 4.6% lower than the 86% national average. The mathematics progress gap between FSM students and their non-FSM Somerset peers has widened by 0.7% to -8.7%, compared to -5.3% nationally.

**At Key Stage 4** The attainment at GCSE of 5+ A\* to C including English and mathematics by students eligible for FSM has seen significant improvement, with 35.9% of FSM students attaining this level, an improvement of 8.2% compared to 2014. Somerset is now less than 1% lower than the national average for attainment, compared to 9% lower in 2014.

The gap between FSM students and their non-FSM Somerset peers has narrowed by almost 5% to -27.3%, and is now in line with national figures.

The percentage of students eligible for FSM making 3 levels of **progress in English** from KS2 to KS4 has also improved significantly, with 59.6% of FSM students attaining this level, an improvement of 9.1%, whereas nationally attainment fell slightly. Somerset is almost 2% ahead of national FSM progress in 3 levels for English, compared to being nearly 9% lower in 2014. This is excellent progress.

The **English** progress gap between FSM students and their non-FSM Somerset peers has narrowed by a significant 7.4%, to -16.5% and is now slightly narrower than nationally.

The percentage of students eligible for FSM making 3 levels of **progress in mathematics** from KS2 to KS4, has improved significantly, at 48.4%, an improvement of 5.2%, whereas nationally attainment only improved by 0.8%. Somerset is now 1.1% lower than the national average, compared to being 5.5% lower in 2014.

However, the **mathematics** progress gap between FSM students and their non-FSM Somerset peers has widened by 1.4% to -25.7%, whereas nationally the gap has widened by just -0.4%, and at -23.3% is 2.4% narrower than Somerset.

## Special Educational Needs (SEN) attainment gaps

Attainment of Somerset pupils with SEN continues to be one of the lowest in the country.

At **Key Stage 1** the special education needs (SEN) gap continues to be significant. At Level 2b+ in Reading the gap for children with SEN support, or an Education Health Care Plan, compared to non-SEN, widened in 2015. Good progress has been made in narrowing the gaps at Level 2b in Writing and Mathematics.

- The gap in reading at level 2b+ has widened by 2.6% to 48.6%.
- In writing the gap has narrowed by 3.1% to 52.5%.
- In mathematics the gap has narrowed by 3% to 41.7%.

For children with a statement of SEN there is a very low rate of attainment at level 2b+. Reading is 3%, Writing 0% and Mathematics 3%. While this is a very small cohort of 33 pupils in 2015, this is still an unacceptable gap.

At **Key Stage 2** SEN attainment of Level 4 and above **reading, writing and mathematics** (RWM) declined by 3.8% to 32.2%, and a widening of the gap between their non-SEN peers to 56.6%.

Nationally there was slight improvement, so Somerset is now significantly below the national average of 38.8% for level 4 and above RWM and Somerset's SEN/non-SEN gap is almost 5.2% wider than the gap nationally.



The percentage of pupils with SEN (with and without statements) who make 2 levels of progress between KS1 and KS2 is slightly lower than nationally for reading and writing, and significantly lower for mathematics.

SEN Pupils making 2 levels of progress in **reading** from KS1 to KS2 declined by 0.4% to 76.5%, 1% lower than the national average. The reading progress gap between SEN pupils and their non-SEN Somerset peers has narrowed by 1.1%, to -16.1%, but this is because attainment of their non-SEN peers declined at a greater rate.

SEN pupils making 2 levels of progress in **writing** from KS1 to KS2 improved slightly by 0.2% to 81.5%, 1.1% lower than the national average. The writing progress gap between SEN students and their non-SEN Somerset peers has narrowed by a margin to -15% and is in line with the national gap.

SEN pupils making 2 levels of progress in **mathematics** from KS1 to KS2 declined significantly by 5.7% to 69.1%. National results declined by less than 1%. Somerset's SEN pupils' progress in mathematics is a significant 4.6% lower than the

73.7% national average. The mathematics progress gap between SEN students and their non-SEN Somerset peers has widened by 4.8% to -23.1%, compared to -19.8% nationally.

Attainment at KS2 level 4 combined **RWM** for pupils with SEN, **without** a statement declined by 4% to just 34% in 2015. This is 8.1% lower than our statistical neighbour average, and 9% lower than the National average, ranking Somerset 133rd nationally. The gap between Somerset and our highest performing statistical neighbour, Devon, is now 19%.

Attainment at KS2 level 4 combined **RWM** for pupils with SEN, **with** a statement, declined by 2% to just 8% in 2015. This is **half** the national and statistical neighbour average of 16%, ranking Somerset 131 out of 151 nationally. (There were only 62 pupils in this cohort including pupils in special schools).

The gap between Somerset and the next poorest performing LA, Norfolk, is 5%. The gap between the highest performing statistical neighbour, Devon, is now 13%. It therefore follows that the gap between Somerset pupils with SEN and their peers, continues to be significant. The gap between SEN pupils **without a statement** gaining level 4 and above in **RWM**, and their non-SEN peers in Somerset is -54.6%.

At **Key Stage 4**, the attainment and progress made by pupils with SEN (with and without statements) has improved significantly compared to 2014, and at a greater rate than their non-SEN peers, so the gaps are closing. This is really encouraging. A greater percentage of Somerset's SEN pupils are making 3 levels of progress in English than their SEN peers nationally.

The attainment at GCSE of 5+ A\* to C including **English and mathematics** by SEN students improved by 2.7% to 45.6%. Somerset is now 2.1% lower than the national average for attainment, compared to 4.9% lower in 2014. The gap between SEN students and their non-SEN Somerset peers has narrowed by 1.9% to -45.6%, and is 1.8% wider than national figures.

The percentage of SEN students making 3 levels of progress in **English** from KS2 to KS4 has improved by 1.9%, with 49.5% of SEN students attaining this level in 2015. Nationally there was a decline of 0.9%. Somerset is now 1.5% ahead of national SEN progress in 3 levels for English, compared to being 1.3% lower in 2014. This is really good progress. The English progress gap between SEN students and their non-SEN Somerset peers has narrowed slightly by 0.7% to -26.8%, but the national gap has narrowed by 1.9% to -26.3%. Somerset is in line with the gap nationally.

The percentage of SEN students making 3 levels of progress in **mathematics** from KS2 to KS4, has improved significantly by 4.5% to 34.1%, whereas nationally attainment only improved by 0.8%. Somerset is now 3.1% lower than the national average, compared to being 6.8% lower in 2014. The mathematics progress gap between SEN students and their non-SEN Somerset peers has narrowed by 1%, (similar to nationally) and is now -40.1%. However, the Somerset gap remains 5% wider than that nationally.

## Children Looked After (CLA) attainment gaps

At **Key Stage 2**, 33% of CLA (who were looked after for more than 12 months) achieved Level 4 or above in **reading, writing and mathematics** at Key Stage 2, the same as 2014. There were 20 children in the 2014 cohort, and 18 in 2015. The 2015 national figures are not published until March 2016, but it is unlikely that Somerset's ranking has improved, given that regional and national performance has seen year on year improvement.

In 2014 Somerset was the poorest performing Local Authority regionally and among its statistical neighbours: 12.33% lower than the statistical neighbour average of 45.33%, and 32% lower than the highest performing statistical neighbour, Devon (65%).

This may in part be explained by the fact that Somerset had the highest percentage of KS2 CLA pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN), without a statement in 2014 at 50.2% compared to the statistical neighbour average of 36.36% and national average of 37.6%.

Encouragingly:

- 94% of 12+ Months CLA pupils achieved 2 levels of progress in reading compared to 90% for all pupils
- 88% achieved 2 levels of progress in writing compared to 93% for all pupils
- 88% achieved 2 levels of progress in mathematics compared to 89% for all pupils
- Somerset CLA progress figures are all higher than the national CLA progress figures for 2014 (2015 data not yet available) which were 81%, 82% and 75% respectively for reading, writing and mathematics

At **Key Stage 4**, 13% of CLA achieved 5 or more A\* to C grades including English and mathematics compared to 14% in 2014.

Some other GCSE outcomes showed marked improvements with 26% of pupils achieving 5 or more A\* to C grades not including English and mathematics, compared to 21% in 2014.

In 2015, several pupils missed out on the first measure due to achievement of a grade D in either English or mathematics but gained 5 A\* to C grades due to success in other subjects. There were 31 young people in this cohort.

# Exclusions

Although the rate of permanent exclusions in 2013/14 was in line with regional and national averages, we have seen an exponential rise in permanent exclusions in Somerset since 2012. The level of fixed term exclusions of children with special educational needs (SEN) and children looked after (CLA) by the Local Authority is unacceptably high.

Somerset had experienced a long term downward trend in **permanent exclusions** until 2011/12. Since then the trend has reversed, with the number of permanent exclusions increasing by 76% to 44 in 2014/15 from 25 in 2012/13. In the first five months of 2015/16 there were 30 permanent exclusions.

The Local Authority recognises that currently there are insufficient options for schools to draw on to enable all pupils to remain in school. We will be working with schools and groups of schools to commission appropriate early help and support and avoid the need for exclusions.

Somerset's **primary schools'** fixed term exclusion figures were higher than those regionally or nationally for all fixed term exclusion indicators in 2013/14, except for 'number of days lost per pupil', which is in-line with the national figure and slightly better than the regional figure. Primary Schools' rates of permanent exclusion were in line with national and regional rates.

In 2014/15, 8 children were permanently excluded from Somerset's primary schools. In the first five months of 15/16, 5 children were permanently excluded.

In 2014/15, 244 primary school pupils received a total of 624 fixed term exclusions, losing a total of 985 days. In the first five months of 2015/16 this was 160 pupils, with a total of 333 fixed term exclusions, losing 564 days.

Somerset's **secondary schools** were in-line with or slightly better than regional or national figures for fixed term, and permanent exclusions in 2013/14. In 2014/15 34 children were permanently excluded from Somerset's secondary schools. In the first five months of 15/16, this figure was 23.

In 2014/15, 1184 secondary school pupils received a total of 2288 fixed term exclusions, losing a total of 4120 days. In the first five months of 2015/16 this was 819 pupils, with a total of 1284 fixed term exclusions, losing 2319 days.

Whilst no children were permanently excluded from Somerset **special schools** in 2013/14, rate of fixed term exclusions, was significantly higher than regional or national figures for all indicators in 2013/14. 12% of pupils in Somerset's special schools had at least one fixed term exclusion, compared to an average of 6.85% regionally and 5.51% nationally.

In 2014/15 one child was permanently excluded, and in the first five months of 2015/16, two children were permanently excluded from Somerset special schools.

In 2014/15, 55 special school pupils received a total of 175 fixed term exclusions, losing a total of 356 days. In the first five months of 2015/16 this was 39 pupils, with a total of 75 fixed term exclusions, losing 128 days.

The most recent published national statistics for pupils with **special educational needs (SEN)** excluded from Somerset's primary, secondary and special schools is for 2012/13 and reveals a worrying picture in Somerset for fixed term exclusions of children with SEN. The percentage of Somerset pupils receiving support at 'School Action Plus' (SA+), and those with SEN, with and without a statement, who had at least one fixed term exclusions in 2012/13 was significantly higher than that regionally or nationally.

The most recent published national data for **children looked after (CLA)** excluded from schools, is for the four academic years from 2009/10 to 2012/13. The percentage of Somerset's CLA pupils with at least one fixed term exclusions exclusion was significantly higher than regionally or nationally each year. In 2012/13, 18.6% of Somerset's CLA had one or more fixed term exclusion, almost double that nationally, and the highest of all local authorities in England. In 2012/13 the gap between Somerset and the regional average widened to 6.4%.

Encouragingly, there has been rapid improvement in the last two years, with a 4.6% reduction in 13/14 to 14% of CLA receiving one or more fixed term exclusion and a further 5% reduction to 9% in 14/15, half that of 12/13. There is no national comparator at present.

# Attendance

Absence rates, including persistent absence rates, for all pupils in primary and secondary schools in 2014, for all measures, were broadly in-line with the south west region and national figures. The government measure for persistent absence (PA) has changed to 'less than 90% attendance' from 'less than 85%', so schools will need to raise their sights further in addressing poor attendance early.

The Local Authority recognises that currently there are insufficient options for schools to draw on to support all pupils and families to improve attendance. We will be working with schools and groups of schools to commission appropriate early help and support and produce a toolkit of strategies to address poor attendance.



The most recent published national data for the attendance of pupils with **special educational needs (SEN)** attendance is for 2012/13 and shows that Somerset's SEN pupils had significantly poorer attendance than SEN pupils nationally or in the South West region, and that Somerset pupils with SEN were more likely to be persistent absentees, than their non-SEN peers.

The most recent published national attendance data for **children looked after (CLA)**, continuously for 12 months or more, is for the two years 2012/13 and 2013/14. Although unauthorised absence rates were better than regional and national rates, Somerset's CLA had significantly poorer attendance than those nationally or in the South West Region.

In 2013/14 Somerset was the lowest performing LA in the region (out of 16 LAs), ranked 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> for CLA 'authorised' and 'overall absence'. However, Somerset had a greater rate of improvement than that regionally or nationally for both indicators from 2013 to 2014. This needs to be accelerated.

In 2014, Somerset's CLA were significantly more likely to be persistent absentees than those in the region or nationally; this figure increased by 1.1% in 2014 to 7.3% compared to an average of 5.5% in the region and 4.7% nationally.

# Ofsted Inspection Outcomes

Somerset's **Early Years** childcare and education is delivered by a wide range of providers; of which, 99% are independent of the local authority (classed as the Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sector) 0-5. The Early Years Foundation Stage covers children until the end of reception year in schools.

Ofsted inspects all **Early Years** providers, and at the end of August 2015, 82% of Somerset's providers had been judged as 'good' or 'outstanding', an improvement of 21% since 2013. However, this is still lower than the regional and national averages of 87%.

Our **Children's Centres** are managed in the five clusters, and subject to Area Ofsted Inspections. We have 24 individual children's centres (subject to their own Ofsted inspections) and 17 de-registered centres (only inspected within an Area inspection). The most recent inspections of two Children's Centre clusters (Taunton and South Somerset), took place in September and October 2014, and both were judged inadequate. The other three clusters have not yet been inspected. The individual Ofsted profile of the 12 registered Children's Centres in these areas, (Mendip, Sedgemoor and West Somerset) at their most recent inspection was: 7 rated 'Satisfactory or Requires Improvement'; 4 rated 'Good' and one has not yet been inspected. Our Children and Young People's plan sets out our intention to 'review and re-establish the role of children's centres services within an integrated early help and public health nursing offer and the future use of children's centre buildings in the communities of Somerset'

Somerset's **primary schools** compare positively to the latest south west and national averages in terms of percentage judged 'good' or 'outstanding'. 89.4% of primary schools in Somerset were judged to be 'good' or 'outstanding' at the last inspection (as at 31st December 2015), better than the all England average of 85.7% (ranked 50<sup>th</sup> out of 151), and in line with the South West region's average of 89.6%. As of December 2015, around half of all primary schools had improved on their previous judgement in their most recent inspection. Twenty-one primary schools (10%) had declined compared to their previous inspection.

In Somerset 88.6% of primary pupils attend a 'good' or 'outstanding' primary school, better than the all England average (ranked 58<sup>th</sup> out of 151), and in line with the South West region's average.



However, Somerset's proportion of 'outstanding' primary schools is 17.4%, lower than statistical neighbours' average of 18.8% and slightly lower than the national average of 17.9%.

The percentage of Somerset's **secondary schools** judged 'good' or 'outstanding' continues to improve, and at 81.6% (December 2015) is similar to the region and better than the national average of 75.3%.

However, Somerset has significantly fewer 'outstanding' secondary schools than other LAs, at just 10.5% in 2015, compared to 17.5% in the region and 21.9% nationally. Overall Somerset is ranked 58<sup>th</sup> out of 151 LAs nationally for 'outstanding' secondary schools.

In December 2015, 83.2% of secondary pupils in Somerset were attending 'good' or 'outstanding' secondary schools, a slight fall from last year after an increase of 22 per cent from 2013 to 2014. Somerset's rank for this measure has dropped from 34<sup>th</sup> in 2014, to 63<sup>rd</sup> in 2015 (out of 151 local authorities).

In Somerset, more students (16.9%) attend a secondary school that 'requires improvement' or is in 'special measures', than those attending an 'outstanding' secondary school (14.7% of students).

Somerset's eight **special schools** have all been inspected since 2013. Seven are judged as good and one outstanding.

All four Somerset Pupil Referral Units were inspected in the academic year 14/15, and all were judged good.