

# Accelerating the achievement of vulnerable groups of children and young people within Cambridgeshire 2014-16



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# Introduction

This strategy is aimed at groups of children and young people who are vulnerable to underachievement. This includes those who are entitled to Free School Meals (FSM), have Special Educational Needs (SEN) or are Looked After (LAC). Other vulnerable groups may be identified by school leaders in their own settings for intervention and support.

We need urgent change to accelerate the achievement of these groups of vulnerable children and young people. Far too many do not achieve 'good' educational attainment or progress levels and the gap between them and their peers is, in most cases, widening at every stage of their school life. This is unacceptable. We need to think differently, challenge ourselves and each other, be open-minded, raise our aspirations, work together and maintain a relentless focus on outcomes. This work has a clear role in shaping our communities and those who live in them.

This strategy is closely aligned to Cambridgeshire's School Improvement Strategy, with the ambition that by 2016, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 attainment gaps will have improved by three percentage points above the rate of improvement by non-FSM pupils year on year, and no school will be below the DfE performance thresholds.

It builds on Narrowing the Gap: Cambridgeshire's strategy to help every child succeed 2012-2014, which sought to shift culture to focus on addressing disadvantage across a range of services. The previous strategy set out four commitments to achieve by 2015 and whilst we met interim targets for two of these - at Key Stage 1 (focussing on boys and FSM) and Key Stage 4 (FSM and post-16 learning) – national progress has been even better. This refreshed strategy is also based on our analysis of need and range of work underway across services for children and families in Cambridgeshire to support accelerated achievement for vulnerable groups of children and young people.



**Adrian Loades**, Executive Director: Children, Families and Adult Services



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## Our vision

We will accelerate the achievement<sup>1</sup> of vulnerable groups of children and young people within Cambridgeshire's schools and settings so that all children and young people achieve their potential. All services for children and families will work together with schools and parents to do all they can to eradicate the achievement gap between vulnerable groups of children and young people and their peers.

<sup>1</sup>Our definition of achievement is taken from Ofsted's Inspection Framework, where achievement takes into account both the progress of pupils and their attainment.

## Where are we now?

Too many children and young people are not achieving 'good' attainment or progress levels and the gap between vulnerable groups of children and young people and their peers is widening.

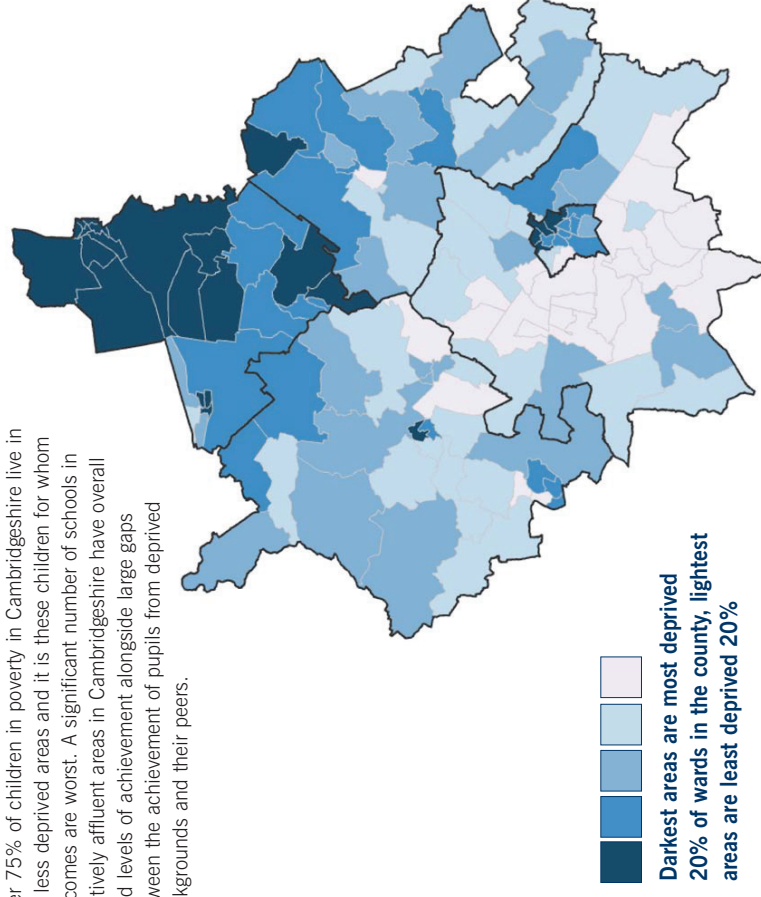
Despite the general affluence across much of the county, there are pockets of real deprivation. Differences in affluence and advantage correlate with marked differences in outcomes; more so in Cambridgeshire than almost anywhere else in the country. In comparison with their Cambridgeshire peers, children growing up in poverty in Cambridgeshire:

- achieve less well at school than almost anywhere else in the country
- are between three and four times more likely to be persistently absent from school
- are nearly three times more likely to not be in employment, education or training beyond age 16
- are more likely to leave education with fewer qualifications

Over 75% of children in poverty in Cambridgeshire live in our less deprived areas and it is these children for whom outcomes are worst. A significant number of schools in relatively affluent areas in Cambridgeshire have overall good levels of achievement alongside large gaps between the achievement of pupils from deprived backgrounds and their peers.

## We also know that:

- our population is becoming increasingly diverse
- around 16,000 children and young people in Cambridgeshire have SEND
- there are approximately 5,000 children under the age of 5 with mental health problems and 8,000 between the ages of 5-16
- more children miss more school time here than in similar authorities



**Darkest areas are most deprived 20% of wards in the county, lightest areas are least deprived 20%**

# How we will achieve our vision

The scale of the challenge in Cambridgeshire requires a whole-system response; schools alone cannot bring about the improvement needed. Families are complex and require the whole system of our children's services to work together – with schools and settings – to meet their needs and strive to improve educational achievement for our vulnerable groups of children and young people.

## Pages 7-11

This refreshed strategy sets out how Cambridgeshire County Council will marshal its resources to support and challenge schools, settings and professionals working with families to accelerate the achievement of those vulnerable to underachievement.

- Our whole system of services will work together to support and challenge schools and settings
- We will improve our analysis and use of data to plan and target services
- We will improve parental engagement in the achievement of vulnerable groups of children and young people in schools and settings, and support parents to keep the aspirations they have for their children on track
- We will be rigorous and systematic in our support and challenge to schools to ensure best use of the Pupil Premium
- We will focus - with schools – on the right support for vulnerable young people to find a career path

## Pages 13-16

This strategy also sets out the key vulnerable groups for whom we urgently need to drive improvement within the Early Years, Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and the secondary phase, and the actions we will undertake to achieve this.

- Improved outcomes of low attaining children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- Accelerated achievement of low attaining children, including those with special educational needs (SEN), at Key Stage 1 (KS1)
- Accelerated progress of children eligible for the pupil premium from KS1 to the end of KS2, and of children from 'any other white background' not eligible for free school meals (FSM)
- Accelerated achievement of vulnerable children and young people in our secondary schools, especially those eligible for FSM, Looked After Children and those with SEN

# Our whole system of services will work together to support and challenge schools and settings

- Professionals across our services will have clear and systematic opportunities to discuss the best support for the vulnerable groups of children and young people we work with to accelerate their educational achievement. For example, in preparation for Fair Access Panels or to ensure that Locality Teams are appropriately supported and informed. This will also include professional development opportunities to improve confidence and ability across our services to meet the needs of families from Central and East Europe.
- We will re-commission our early help services so that preventative services build capacity in schools and settings, families and communities to deal effectively with emerging problems and improve educational outcomes for vulnerable groups of children and young people. This includes supporting schools with emerging behavioural issues, focussing on educational transition points and expanding the use of the Risk of Non-participation Indicator (RONI).
- Our preventative services will focus on the family, not just the child, with a single family plan supported by a multi-disciplinary team, of which schools are a key part. The family plan will address barriers to achievement, such as attendance, additional educational needs, emerging mental health needs and poor family support with literacy and numeracy.
- We will work with schools to identify families meeting the criteria for the Together for Families programme, with a focus on those most vulnerable to exclusion. We will support changes in children's behaviour at school and at home using family-based therapeutic intervention delivered in the school.
- We will review the educational progress of children whose families are part of the Together For Families programme, to evaluate the impact of wider interventions on learning. This evaluation will inform the planning and targeting of services.
- Our services for children and young people with SEND will work together to understand the interaction between the multiple factors at play and the best support to provide at the right time. They will promote and support Quality First Teaching, and best practice to address additional and specific needs.

## We will improve our analysis and use of data to plan and target services

## We will improve parental engagement in the achievement of vulnerable groups of children and young people in schools and settings, and support parents to keep the aspirations they have for their children on track

- We are undertaking an in-depth analysis of the 2013 KS2 cohort who failed to reach the expected level, to improve our understanding of this group and provide evidence for services and schools to plan and target future work. This will bring together information about prior performance, demographic and individual characteristics and attendance and exclusion records, as well as information about other involvements with our services, including Children's Social Care and Locality Teams. For example, the rate of progress for children who have had a successful Common Assessment Framework (CAF) based intervention.
- Improved analysis and use of data will support research into the effectiveness of our interventions to help us plan for the future. It will inform the commissioning of services and highlight the work they need to do to improve the achievement of those who are vulnerable to underachievement.
- A systematic review of the vast evidence base and literature on interventions that close the gap in outcomes between vulnerable groups and their peers will make explicit recommendations for action to accelerate achievement of vulnerable groups through our services and settings.
- We will improve how we share information and challenge across our children's services to support improved educational outcomes for our vulnerable groups of children and young people. For example, we will highlight schools and settings with the largest or most stubborn gaps and ensure our system of services work together to best support the sector.
- We will seek the views of children and parents about the support they receive and this will also inform the targeting and planning of our services.

- All professionals working with vulnerable groups of children and families (for example, social workers) will be supported to improve parental understanding of how to help with learning at home. This will include help with understanding school reporting mechanisms and attainment level terminology, alongside the importance of social and emotional aspects of learning. We will develop parenting programmes that support accelerated achievement of vulnerable groups of children and young people.
- We recognise the importance of the early years to development and achievement. Through Children's Centres, we will target interventions, information and guidance to vulnerable families to support their child's learning, building parental confidence and ensuring they become engaged with services at an early stage.
- Educational outcomes and school attendance will be routinely considered as part of our child in need (CIN) planning. For example, it will be routine to see children's school reports at Children Protection reviews and as part of the adoption best interest process.
- As corporate parents, we will advocate and challenge the use of the additional funding schools receive for looked after children to ensure activity is well focussed on improving achievement for these vulnerable children and young people. We will challenge schools to ensure they set high aspirations and intervene where our aspirations are not being met.
- We will improve the way we use the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) to support children, families and settings, raise aspirations and accelerate achievement. This will include promotion of holistic family-based assessments, with a focus on actions by families and professionals. We will also intervene and provide services to meet the needs of the whole family to enable children, young people and families to make the most of educational and personal development opportunities.
- New guidance to schools and settings will support the necessary changes from SEND reforms and new legislation, particularly in relation to their engagement of parents, carers and children in setting their learning outcomes and the support and care arrangements.

## We will be rigorous and systematic in our support and challenge to schools to ensure best use of the Pupil Premium

## We will focus - with schools – on the right support for vulnerable young people to find a career path

- Professionals, including social workers and specialist teachers, will be clearer about how schools are using the Pupil Premium for a particular Looked After Child and will ask for evidence that this is having a positive impact on their achievement.
- We will make use of a wide range of available tools, such as the NCTL accredited Headteacher list, the Pupil Premium Review and the Education Endowment Foundation toolkit, to encourage schools to allocate funds to the most appropriate interventions. We will maximise use of good quality external literacy and numeracy programmes provided in local communities and support the Voluntary and Community Service to signpost where these are available.
- Governance Reviews or Health Checks will include the impact of a school's actions on the performance of children and young people vulnerable to underachievement and the use of the Pupil Premium.
- We will focus on the 20% of eligible families who do not claim the FSM entitlement for their children and do more to both understand this group and plan services to improve their achievement.
- We will support increased involvement of businesses with vulnerable young people, giving them experience of work, inspiring them to go down different routes and helping them understand what they need to do to get a job.
- We will challenge schools to ensure they set high aspirations for vulnerable young people and support them to ensure the qualifications they help young people achieve are those which will help them get onto good post-16 courses that lead to Higher Education/ Apprenticeship or employment opportunities.
- We will accelerate county-wide programmes to strengthen links between schools and employers. This includes, for example, a new model established by the Cambridge Area Partnership (CAP) where schools and (some of our largest) employers work together to strengthen education-business links to recruit business support for all CAP schools and colleges. Independent advisors will offer sector-focused information and advice on accessing careers in the growth sectors.
- We will further develop collaboration between key workers in the Adult Careers Service and employers in the key sectors to pilot enhanced information, advice and guidance (IAG) in local schools. We will support and challenge schools to develop a whole family approach to IAG.
- We will ensure full awareness and take up by vulnerable groups of young people to the bursaries available to them.

## We will improve the outcomes of low attaining children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

# Driving accelerated achievement for specific vulnerable groups of children and young people at each educational phase

Alongside the whole of children’s services working together – with schools and settings – to accelerate the achievement of vulnerable groups of children and young people, we will also drive a relentless focus on the achievement of particular vulnerable groups that we have identified for urgent improvement at specific educational phases (the Early Years, Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and secondary).

These vulnerable groups of children and young people have been identified from our analysis of 2013 achievement data across Cambridgeshire. A high-level summary of this data is set out in the appendix to this strategy (page 18).

Pages 13-16 set out the key actions that Cambridgeshire County Council will undertake to support schools and settings to accelerate the achievement of specific groups of children and young people vulnerable to underachievement at each Key Stage, alongside the key criteria we will use to measure success and milestones for tracking progress.

### Actions for local authority

1. Evaluate FSM project working with 12 schools (reception year) in July 2014, focusing on communication and language and mathematics.
2. Develop Raising Early Achievement in Literacy (REAL) project working with 3 Children’s Centre cluster areas selected through low EYFSP (literacy).
3. Scheduled training for maths will be increased and targeted schools will be invited to attend at no charge.
4. Provide awareness-raising visits to 10 settings/ nursery classes where outcomes are low, in order to identify where there is a need to improve outcomes for children. Offer coaching and support and monitor data in July 2014.
5. Increase tracking of funded 2 year olds EYFS, developing a county base-line.
6. Continue to deliver high quality, coordinated services which provide a continuum of support for children and families pre-birth to 5 years, which is fully integrated to the 0-19 Early Help offer for children and young people.
7. Children’s Centres will continue to commission targeted Speech and Language Therapy provision to enable early identification of difficulties and support language development for the most vulnerable children.

### Success criteria

- Raise the attainment of children in ‘Speaking’ and ‘Listening and Attention’ in the EYFSP by 4 percentage points (ppt).
- Raise the attainment of children in mathematics in the EYFSP by 4ppt.
- Improve the percentage of children achieving a good level of development in specific areas of disadvantage: Wisbech (by 5%), March (2%), Chatteris (2%), Cambridge North (2%) and Cambridge South (2%).

### Milestones

- Vulnerable children identified in all *Closing the Gap* project settings by March 2014.
- Tracking in FSM project schools shows improved outcomes in July 2014.
- Tracking and progress of vulnerable groups monitored at termly support visits and at the annual Keeping In Touch meeting.

## We will improve the achievement of low attaining Children, including those with Special Educational Needs, at Key Stage 1

### Actions for local authority

1. Challenge and support schools to have high expectations for children and young people with SEND by setting aspirational targets and implementing regular tracking of progress.
2. SEND services will support schools and settings to implement evidence-based interventions and monitor their effectiveness.
3. Deliver bespoke and on-going training to develop the capability of teaching and non-teaching staff in mainstream and special schools and settings to develop a better understanding of the individual needs of the child or young person with SEND.
4. Promote Phonics Programme initiative to schools with high numbers of pupils at School Action and School Action+ (fund 30 training places).
5. Lead small scale research project focused on reaching 'hard to reach' parents to develop engagement and home support for learning and disseminate approaches that work.
6. Identify schools where the attainment for children with SEN at KS1 is below national standards; map current input with the schools and ensure a co-ordinated plan is in place.
7. Implement the Families and Schools Together (FAST) programme to improve the achievement of vulnerable children, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds.

### Success criteria

- Close the gap between children with SEN and their peers in reading by 2ppt to in line with the national average (currently 40%).
- Raise attainment of children with SEN in reading to in line with national average (currently 55%).
- Improve the progress of children at Level 1 and below in reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 1 to in line with the national average.
- Improve the outcomes of Year 1 phonic screening to 100% by Year 2.
- Improve the attainment of children who are Looked After to in line with the national average for LAC.

### Milestones

- Individualised Phonics Programme in place by Spring term 2014.
- 9 schools identified for Year 1 phonics screening in line with Cambridgeshire average.
- Expanded Rehearsal Technique (ERT) to support the early stages of reading development for children with poor scores on the phonics test in Year 1.
- 50 schools purchase package for Improving Outcomes for Children with Additional Needs.
- 'FAST' programme implemented with at least two establishments.

## We will rapidly improve the progress of children eligible for the pupil premium from Key Stage 1 to the end of Key Stage 2, and of children from 'any other white background' not eligible for FSM

### Actions for local authority

1. Promote use of the Pupil Premium Review to identify appropriate interventions for those in receipt of this additional funding.
2. Provide progress tracking data for KS2 children at school level, to support target setting.
3. Promote Joint Practice Development (JPD) initiatives focused on accelerating the achievement of vulnerable groups, linking under and better performing schools.
4. Implement the Families and Schools Together (FAST) programme in at least two establishments to improve the achievement of vulnerable groups, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds.
5. Run a project in at least two primary schools to improve the involvement of Turkish mothers in their children's schooling.
6. Develop Attachment and Trauma Aware Schools to improve and support school staff's understanding of the impact of attachment difficulties and trauma on learning.

### Milestones

- 130 school visits identified for focussed review of provision with appropriate recommendations for action.
- Schools with the highest number of pupils with SEND not making 3 levels of progress in English and mathematics or those with low attainment are identified for 2014/15 AFA project in Summer 2014.
- Attachment and Trauma Aware Schools programme completed with follow up in school training to begin from June 2014.
- Head of Virtual School devises pupil premium implementation process after receipt of condition of Pupil Premium grant.

### Success criteria

- Close the gap between non-FSM and FSM in reading, writing and maths by 10ppt to in line with national average (currently 17ppt).
- Raise attainment of children in receipt of FSM by 2ppt in reading, writing and maths combined to in line with national average.
- Improve the progress of children at Level 1 and below in reading, writing and maths from KS1 to KS2 in line with national figures.
- Accelerate the progress of children from 'any other white background' learning EAL at Level 1 in reading, writing and maths from KS1 to KS2 so the percentage achieving L4+ is in line with national figures.
- Number of LAC (12 months+) in Cambridgeshire schools make 2 levels of progress from KS1 to KS2 in line with national LAC achievement.



## We will improve the achievement of vulnerable children and young people in secondary schools, especially those eligible for FSM, Looked After Children and those with SEN

### Actions for local authority

1. Champion strong outcomes and provision for vulnerable groups by using KIT meetings with individual schools to highlight and discuss their performance.
2. Support improved outcomes and provision for vulnerable groups by continuing to fund Closing the Gap and Foundation Learning projects in Fenland, CAP and Hunts.
3. Provide or broker professional development opportunities and share effective practice to support improved provision for vulnerable groups in schools.
4. Strengthen position of Virtual School to influence improved outcomes for LAC through: use of Pupil Premium Plus; Attachment Aware Schools programme; and faster allocation of appropriate school places to LAC.
5. Target bespoke packages to schools to commission or undertake reviews for vulnerable groups.
6. Target bespoke training and coaching on developing resilience and character strengths (Values in Action).
7. Ensure that the alternative provision arrangements for pupils provided through the BAIPs sufficiently address educational progress of the young people.
8. Build on the Risk of Non-participation Indicator (RONI) pilot to ensure the most vulnerable groups receive the support they need to make a good transition to employment, education or training (EET).
9. Strengthen arrangements for the support of LAC to enable them to make a good transition to EET, pooling resource and expertise across children, families and adults services to deliver significant progress.

### Success criteria

- The FSM/non-FSM attainment gap closes to at least the national average by 2017.
- The progress made by vulnerable groups, particularly those eligible for Pupil Premium, Pupil Premium Plus, those with SEN and identified BME/EAL groups, in English and mathematics is above the progress made by such pupils nationally by 2017.
- Percentage of LAC (12 months +) in Cambridgeshire schools make expected levels of progress between KS2 and KS4 in line with national data.

### Milestones

- FSM/non-FSM attainment gap closes by 5% in 2015 and a further 10% in 2016.
- Progress made by vulnerable groups, particularly those eligible for Pupil Premium, Pupil Premium Plus, those with SEN and identified BME/EAL groups, in English and mathematics is at least equivalent to the progress made by such pupils nationally by 2015 and 2016.

See appendix for needs analysis

## How will we know we have been successful?

We will publish an annual report on the gap in educational outcomes between vulnerable groups of children and young people and their peers across Cambridgeshire. This analysis of identified need and the impact of our interventions will inform planning and targeting of services.

Delivery of an action plan for the activity set out in this strategy will be regularly monitored by both Cambridgeshire's Nursery, Primary, Secondary and Special School Headteacher groups, and a new taskforce within the local authority to drive accelerated achievement for vulnerable groups of children and young people.

Monthly performance indicators related to accelerating the achievement of our vulnerable groups will continue to be reviewed – on a monthly basis - by both the Learning Directorate Performance Board and the Children, Families and Adult (CFA) Services Performance Board.

# Appendix

## Evidence of need based on 2013 data

### In the Early Years

51% of children reached a 'good level of development' (52% nationally) in the Foundation Stage Profile. Included in the 49% who did not reach this level are children eligible for FSM (31.5%) and children living in the 30% most disadvantaged areas. For these children, the areas of learning where attainment was lowest, compared to the national, are communication and language and mathematics.

### At Key Stage 1

1052 children failed to achieve Level 2+ in reading, writing and maths.

This included:

- 654 children with SEN (61% of the cohort). Between 2011-2013 the attainment gap at KS1 L2+ reading between children with School Action and their peers widened by 5ppt to 42ppt;
- 297 children eligible for FSM (37% of the cohort). Between 2011-2013 the FSM gap at KS1 L2+ in maths widened by 4ppt to 38ppt; and
- 4 out of 10 children who are Looked After (40% of the cohort) - one has SEN, one on School Action+ and five are looked after by other Local Authorities.

### At Key Stage 2

1668 children failed to achieve Level 4+ in reading, writing TA and maths. This included:

- 988 children with SEN – 72% of the cohort.
- 344 children eligible for FSM - 53% of the cohort. Between 2011 and 2013 the FSM gap widened by 2ppt to 29ppt for reading, writing TA and maths.
- 40 out of 51 Gypsy/Roma children – 78% of the cohort.
- 13 out of 18 Cambridgeshire LAC in Cambridgeshire schools - 72% of the cohort. Nine of these children have SEN
- 110 out of 218 children with a Central or East European home language – 52% of the cohort

### Our analysis against the current Department for Education Key

Stage 2 performance thresholds for schools is as follows:

- 23 Cambridgeshire schools failed to achieve 60% or more of their cohort achieving L4+ in Reading, Writing TA and Maths combined.
- 92 schools failed to achieve benchmark of 90% or more achieving 2 Levels of progress in Reading.
- 94 schools failed to achieve 94% or more of their cohort achieving 2 levels of progress in writing.
- 111 schools failed to achieve 91% or more of their cohort achieving 2 Levels of progress in maths.
- 11 schools failed to achieve all four Floor Targets.

### Across the secondary school phase

- The FSM/non-FSM attainment gap narrowed by 3 percentage points in Cambridgeshire, but widened by 1 percentage point nationally (although it is still wider than the national average).
- At KS4, in 2013, the SEN/non-SEN attainment gap was unchanged in Cambridgeshire (remained in line with the gap nationally)
- LAC attending Cambridgeshire provision did not achieve 5 A\*-C (including English and mathematics). 6 of this group were attending Special Schools and one was attending County School.

Accelerating the  
achievement  
of vulnerable  
groups of children  
and young  
people within  
Cambridgeshire  
2014-16

