



Education and Learning

Closing the Gap Strategy

**Championing better life chances for
our most vulnerable learners**

2015 - 2018

*Working for
Warwickshire*

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1.0 Introduction

The Council's core purpose is to 'develop and sustain a society that looks after its most vulnerable members, delivers appropriate, quality services at the right time, and seeks opportunities for economic growth and innovation.'

We will know that we are on the right track when:

- Our communities and individuals are safe and protected from harm and are able to remain independent for longer.
- The health and wellbeing of all in Warwickshire is protected.
- Our economy is vibrant, residents have access to jobs, training and skills development.
- Warwickshire's communities are supported by excellent communications and transport infrastructure.
- Resources and services are targeted effectively, whether delivered by the local authority, commissioned or in partnership.

2.0 Our Education Vision states:

Warwickshire will be forward looking in Education and Skills wanting every child and young person to:

- attend a good or outstanding school or setting
- achieve well—whatever their starting point or circumstance
- and go on to positive destinations so that, as they become young adults, they have an independent economic and social life.

This strategy provides a framework for the commissioning and delivery of education services and support for disadvantaged children, young people and families in order to close the performance gap to fulfil potential. It outlines the strategic direction, identifying clear objectives and commissioning intentions to improve outcomes for our disadvantaged youngsters.

Warwickshire County Council, as Champion for the Learner, is committed to giving all of the children and young people in our schools and settings the best possible start in life, especially those most vulnerable and disadvantaged, to access

throughout their lives every opportunity to enjoy, achieve, contribute and live independently.

Our schools and other educational and community settings can make a real difference to the future success of the children and young people they educate. Research tells us that there is clear evidence of the link between educational achievement and future life chances.

It is an important fact however that not all children and young people start from the same point and, in some children's lives, factors such as poverty and family circumstances can have a significant limiting effect on their achievement and attainment.

Sir Michael Wilshaw, HMCI has stated recently that:

"A large minority of children still do not succeed at school or college... This unseen body of children and young people that underachieve throughout our education system represents an unacceptable waste of human potential... exceptional schools can make up for grave disadvantages."

In the publication, Unseen Children: access and achievement 20 years on, 2013, he goes on to say:

"Exceptional schools can change lives but we must understand how to use our potential for change effectively. Outstanding teaching is important but there is no evidence that outstanding schools are any better than others in narrowing the achievement gap. A much more holistic approach is needed. This is a call to action to every school regardless of your Ofsted inspection grade. Every school has a duty to break the cycle of poverty and every school has the potential to do so".

3.0 Role of the School /Setting

Every individual child has unique and different needs and in order to fulfil their potential it is the role of the school to be ambitious for **all** their children and to ensure that all children have the opportunity to enjoy, achieve and live independently. To do this, it is sometimes necessary to actively remove barriers to learning and achieving so that children make accelerated progress to achieve their real potential, not just keep up with their peers.

4.0 Role of the Local Authority

The Local Authority (LA) has a role to champion all learners by supporting and challenging schools by holding them to account for improving outcomes for all learners and closing the gap between the outcomes for disadvantaged learners and their peers.

It is the role of the local authority to work across the Early Years' foundation stage, primary, secondary and post-16 phases to ensure that they share best practice and

support the development of evidence -based programmes in schools. They should plan targeted approaches to raise the aspirations of children from low-income families and engage parents in school life.

Recent changes in legislation in relation to education in England include a commitment to an increasingly diverse range of educational providers with greater freedom and autonomy, with limited local accountability. The local authority's role in holding schools to account in terms of the quality of provision has changed and we must therefore evolve and adapt to meet the needs of a more autonomous education system, whilst still ensuring that the needs are met of all children living and attending schools in Warwickshire.

In a climate of financial austerity it is crucial that schools target any new resources for disadvantaged learners into interventions that are proven to raise outcomes for these children specifically.

5.0 Pupil Premium

The Pupil Premium is additional funding given to schools so that they can support their disadvantaged pupils and close the attainment gap between them and their peers. From 2015 Pupil Premium Funding will also be provided for Early Years.

The government believes that the Pupil Premium, which is additional to main school funding, is the best way to address the current underlying inequalities between children eligible for free school meals (FSM) and their peers by ensuring that funding to tackle disadvantage reaches the pupils who need it most.

The Pupil Premium was introduced in April 2011 and is allocated to schools to work with pupils who are Looked After by the local authority (children who have been looked after continuously for more than six months), have been registered for free school meals at any point in the last six years (known as 'Ever 6 FSM'), and children of service personnel.

The Pupil Premium has risen to £1.875 billion in 2013 – 2014, with schools attracting significant additional funding per disadvantaged child.

6.0 Background to Educational Achievement for Disadvantaged Children in Warwickshire

Many children do well in our schools but a significant minority of children do not. There is a clear gap between the attainment and achievement of the majority of children compared with disadvantaged children.

Narrowing this attainment gap is a national and local priority, reflected in our commitment to improve outcomes for all learners.

It is also essential to narrow the gaps in educational achievement if we are to break cycles of disadvantage and ensure that all children have an equal opportunity to

achieve, thus contributing to the economic and social well-being of individuals, families and communities.

All schools will have some disadvantaged pupils as part of their community so it needs to be a priority that all senior leaders in our schools ensure that their workforce recognise their responsibility to identify the gaps, design and implement strategies to narrow gaps, monitor progress in narrowing gaps and celebrate success when gaps are narrowed.

7.0 Why is this strategy needed?

Research evidence indicates that children and young people from vulnerable groups are at risk of poorer outcomes and life chances than their peers.

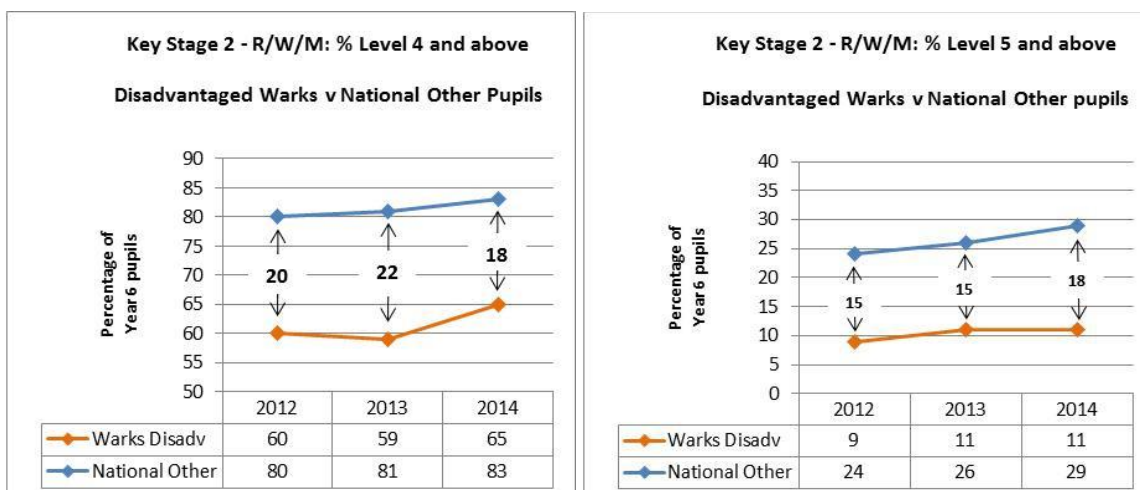
Data available from Warwickshire Education Business Unit show that children and young people from disadvantaged groups perform less well than their peers and in some cases the performance gap is widening.

8.0 Facts, Figures and Findings

8.1 Disadvantaged Pupils (Free School Meal and Looked After)

In terms of performance (attainment and progress), it is clear that pupils eligible (or that have been eligible) for free school meals and/or are looked after are amongst the most vulnerable to underperformance. When comparing Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 data, these 'disadvantaged pupils' as defined by the DfE, underperform compared to their peers. The DfE define 'disadvantaged pupils' as children who have been eligible for free school meals at any time in the last 6 years (FSM) and /or children looked after (CLA).

8.2 Key Stage 2 attainment of disadvantage pupils at level 4 and level 5 +



		R/W/M % achieving L4 and above		
		Disadv Pupils	Other Pupils	Gap
Warwickshire	2012	60	81	-21
	2013	59	82	-23
	2014	65	85	-20
Similar Councils	2012	58	80	-22
	2013	59	81	-22
	2014	65	84	-19
National	2012	61	80	-19
	2013	63	81	-18
	2014	67	83	-16

		R/W/M % achieving L5 and above		
		Disadv Pupils	Other Pupils	Gap
Warwickshire	2012	9	27	-18
	2013	11	29	-18
	2014	11	32	-21
Similar Councils	2012	8	24	-16
	2013	9	26	-17
	2014	11	29	-18
National	2012	9	24	-15
	2013	10	26	-16
	2014	12	29	-17

Warwickshire pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding at the end of KS2 in 2014 constituted 22% of the year group. Only 65% of these disadvantaged pupils achieved a Level 4 or above in Reading, Writing and Maths compared with 83% of pupils nationally not in receipt of this additional funding.

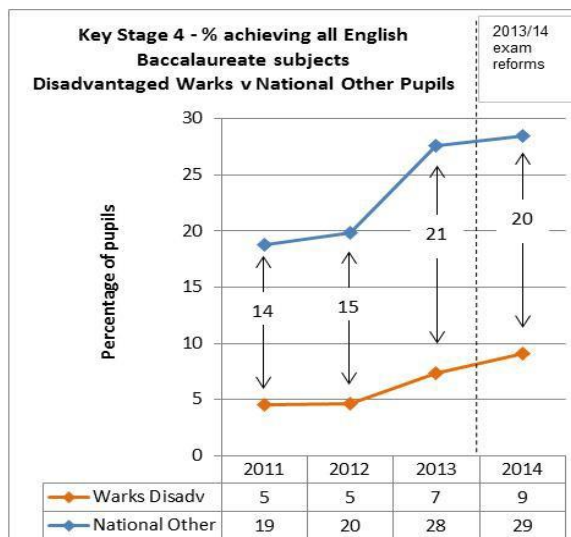
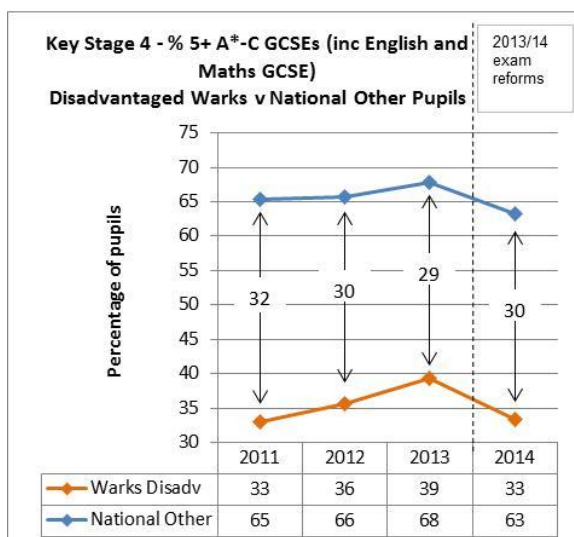
The attainment of Warwickshire disadvantaged pupils achieving above the nationally expected level (achieving a Level 5 and above) has remained at 11% between 2013 and 2014; however the attainment of other pupils nationally has increased by 3 percentage points. This has widened the gap from 15 percentage points in 2013 to 18 percentage points in 2014. Within Warwickshire the gap has grown by 3% to 21% compared to a national gap of only 17%.

8.3 Key Stage 2 progress of disadvantaged pupils

In Warwickshire, the disadvantaged 'gap' for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 making expected progress from Key Stage 1 remained static for reading between 2014 and 2015 and reduced 1 percentage point for maths and 3 percentage points in writing.

Nationally, higher proportions of disadvantaged pupils are making expected progress in all three of the subjects of Reading, Writing and Maths compared to Warwickshire.

8.4 Key Stage 4 attainment of disadvantaged pupil

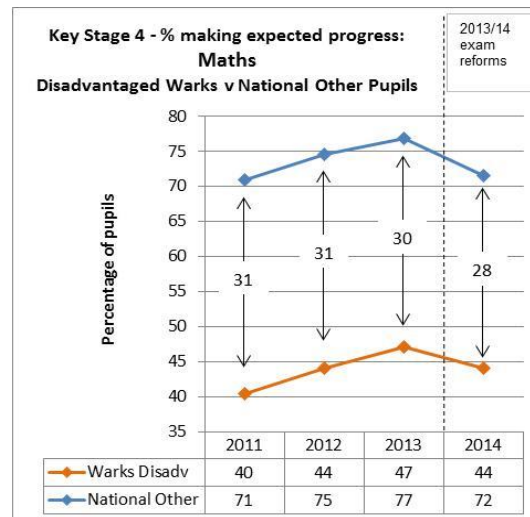
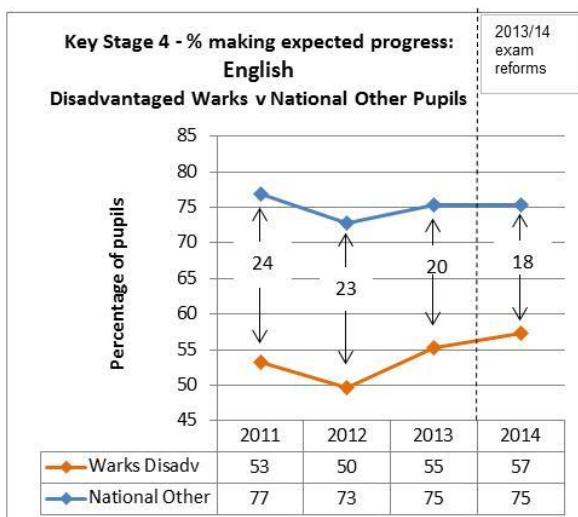


% 5+ GCSEs at A*-C (or equivalent) including E&M		Disadv Pupils	Other Pupils	Gap
Warwickshire	2011	33	66	-33
	2012	36	69	-33
	2013	39	71	-32
	2014	33	66	-32
Similar Councils	2011	31	64	-33
	2012	33	65	-32
	2013	35	67	-32
	2014			
National	2011	36	65	-29
	2012	39	66	-27
	2013	41	68	-27
	2014	36	63	-27

% achieving all English Baccalaureate subjects		Disadv Pupils	Other Pupils	Gap
Warwickshire	2011	5	20	-16
	2012	5	22	-17
	2013	7	25	-18
	2014	9	29	-20
Similar Councils	2011	4	18	-14
	2012	4	18	-14
	2013	7	25	-19
	2014			0
National	2011	5	19	-14
	2012	6	20	-14
	2013	10	28	-18
	2014	11	29	-18

The gaps widen as pupils continue their schooling, with a difference of 30ppts in the attainment of 5+ GCSEs at A*-C (or equivalent) including GCSE English and Maths between Warwickshire disadvantaged pupils and national other pupils in 2014. This gap has remained largely static since 2012.

8.5 Key Stage 4 progress of disadvantaged pupils



		English: % making expected progress (3 Levels)					Maths: % making expected progress (3 Levels)		
		Disadv Pupils	Other Pupils	Gap			Disadv Pupils	Other Pupils	Gap
Warwickshire	2011	53	79	-25	Warwickshire	2011	40	71	-30
	2012	50	75	-26		2012	44	74	-30
	2013	55	78	-23		2013	47	77	-30
	2014	57	76	-19		2014	44	74	-30
Similar Councils	2011	50	76	-26	Similar Councils	2011	40	70	-30
	2012	48	72	-24		2012	45	73	-28
	2013	51	75	-24		2013	48	76	-28
	2014					2014			
National	2011	56	77	-21	National	2011	46	71	-25
	2012	54	73	-19		2012	52	75	-23
	2013	57	75	-19		2013	54	77	-23
	2014	58	75	-17		2014	48	72	-23

The proportion of disadvantaged pupils making expected progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 is lower in Warwickshire than at a National level for both English and maths; 48% of disadvantaged pupils in England achieved the expected progress in maths compared to the lower 44% in Warwickshire.

The size of the gap of Warwickshire disadvantaged pupils making expected progress in maths compared to national other pupils has reduced by 2% to 28 percentage points in 2014. The gap in expected progress in English has reduced from 24 percentage points in 2011 to 18 percentage points in 2014.

9.0 What makes a difference for disadvantaged Learners?

Regarding addressing the needs and aspirations of our disadvantaged learners we value equally classroom-based initiatives as we do initiatives or activities outside of the classroom which aim to support the growth of ambition, aspiration and achievement of those learners and their families

Children and young people living in poverty respond to classroom interventions that improve instructional processes and teaching methods. All children including those from deprived backgrounds respond positively to opportunities that raise their life ambitions, learning aspirations and future success.

Parents and carers should be actively engaged by schools to support their child's development and learning. Breaking cycles of low aspiration and disenfranchisement with education is an important step for narrowing attainment gaps. Engaging parents with school life through parents' evenings and other activities is crucial, as well as encouraging parents to engage with the child's learning at school and in the home

Strong and visionary leadership, provided by head teachers to establish a culture of moral purpose within the school, is often the driving force behind improving outcomes for children living in poverty.

Consciously or otherwise, leaders and managers develop cultures around them. They may articulate what they believe is important but their behaviors show what really matters to them and are modelled by others across the organisation. What is tacitly accepted or ignored also impacts on the behaviours of others. Effective leaders model a strong and consistent alignment between what is said and what is done. Schools are often very clear about their values and beliefs, but the most effective schools ensure that these carry through consistently to the behavior and actions of every member of staff and every pupil.

Culture is particularly powerful in relation to Closing the Gap as it is likely to have the greatest impact on the most disadvantaged and vulnerable learners. The explicit development of a culture conducive to success is a key responsibility of all head teachers and senior leaders.

Promoting an inclusive learning school environment is likely to have the greatest impact on the most disadvantaged and vulnerable learners. A learning environment which label pupils entitled to FSM as less able, undeserving or lacking commitment, ensures pupils are likely to be further disadvantaged. By contrast, a learning environment which insists that everybody values individuals and personal opportunity, builds self – belief and focuses on the core business of learning, is likely to increase success. The development of an inclusive learning environment is a key responsibility of all head teachers and senior leaders.

Research evidence shows the central importance of the quality of teaching in enabling all children – especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds – to succeed. As well as excellent individual teaching practice, consistency in approach within each school is also important, so that each child's experience is consistently excellent from lesson to lesson and the key learning experiences are constantly reinforced. Every school should have a clear teaching and learning policy which identifies its key practices and strategies for securing consistently high standards of teaching and ensure that it is providing the right support for teachers to deliver that consistency.

<http://www.suttontrust.com/about-us/education-endowment-foundation/teaching-learning-toolkit/>

10.0 We expect schools to:

- Rigorously use data to identify gaps and to make them visible, pinpoint pupils at risk of underperforming and challenge those whose progress needs to accelerate;
- accept no excuses;
- take time to understand the needs of each pupil, know what works best for vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils and apply it consistently and relentlessly;
- evaluate, celebrate and share success;
- support school transitions;
- provide strong and visionary leadership

- Reach out to the families of disadvantaged learners and the communities in which they live
- Support all relevant families to access FSM and other benefit entitlement
- Fully engage with the Priority Families Programme

We expect all head teachers and governors to make effective use of the Pupil Premium and EY Pupil Premium to:

- raise pupil aspirations using engagement/aspiration programmes;
- develop social and emotional competencies;
- intervene early and effectively, track progress and change approaches where necessary;
- focus on transition, one-to-one tuition and progressive development of motor language and literacy skills;
- seek out the most effective ways of engaging parents, families and the local community, listening to pupils and their families and engaging them in sustained and meaningful dialogue about learning.

11.0 The Local Authority will:

1. Establish a project board which will include a variety of work streams to identify issues and potential solutions and to share best practice across Warwickshire.

The work streams will include.

1. Peer Review	2. Achievement for All
3. Governance	4. Looked After Children
5. FSM Claiming, Priority Families and Family Learning	6. Early Years Foundation Stage, primary and transitions
7. Warwick University Research	

2. A project board will be established to oversee the projects and to allocate funding to support these projects.
3. A web site and toolkit will be produced to capture and share good practice.
4. Conferences or networking events will be held to share ideas and outcomes.
5. Hold schools and governing bodies to account for the use of their PP.
6. Support schools to maximize their PP via the promotion of FSM entitlements.
7. Ensure the inclusion of all schools in the opportunities for their families that are provided by the Priority Families Programme

12.0 Local Authority Targets

The Education and Learning Business Unit plan 2014-2018 sets out the Local Authority's targets for Closing the Gap. Targets are pending Cabinet approval 10th December 2015.

Closing the Gap - Attainment: Key Stage 2 (Primary):

**% gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils:
% achieving level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths**

Aim	Trend data			Targets			
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Smaller is better	20%	23%	18%	17%	13%	9%	5%

Closing the Gap - Attainment: Key Stage 4 (Secondary):

**% gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils:
% achieving 5 or more A*-C grades including English & maths**

Aim	Trend data			Targets			
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Smaller is better	30%	29%	30%	25%	20%	15%	10%