

**REPORT FOR: PERFORMANCE AND
FINANCE SCRUTINY SUB-
COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting: 18 January 2011

Subject: Project Update - Narrowing the Gap

Responsible Officer: Catherine Doran, Director of Children's Services

Scrutiny Lead Member area: Councillor Krishna James – Performance Lead for Children and Young People

Exempt: No

Enclosures: None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

Sub-Committee members asked for an update on work to narrow the gap in academic achievement between highest achieving young people and vulnerable groups. The report below provides details of the programme of work the latest results. The data demonstrates that the achievement gap has been significantly narrowed for the targeted groups.

FOR INFORMATION

Section 2 – Report

Narrowing the Gap

The vision for Narrowing the Gap for underperforming groups continues to be a high priority for the Harrow Partnership and is shared by Harrow's leaders, headteachers, governors and school staff.

Harrow is a high achieving education authority. However, as is the case with many other authorities, we have some groups which are not achieving as well and our high achieving schools include students from more deprived families and other students who under achieve.

To help these pupils we have focussed a large amount of work around the attainment gap between pupils from Black Caribbean, Somali and our White working class communities and their peers in Harrows Schools. We have implemented a Narrowing the Gap Golden Threads programme throughout our schools in Harrow, which includes working with the school leadership to integrate and lead on Narrowing the Gap initiatives in their school improvement plan.

The performance of our Black African pupils has increased at both Key Stages 2 and 4, with 45% of our Black African pupils achieving 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English & Maths. Similarly the performance of our White British pupils eligible for free school meals at Key Stage 4 has significantly improved over the last two years, with 33% (provisional figure) of White British pupils eligible for Free School Meals achieving 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English & Maths in 2010, compared to 25% in 2009! This success is a part of Harrow narrowing the gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers at Key Stage 4.

Through sharing local authority and school data with schools and their staff we have been able to raise the awareness of the gap between the targeted group and their peers. We have also effectively used data to target resources and ensure children have support and proper access to extended services to prevent them from falling behind. In May 2009 a pilot project commenced, which was delivered jointly by Harrow Council and PAIWAND (An Afghan community association specialising in running Supplementary Schools). The aim of the project was to establish and successfully run a weekend school for 50-60 disadvantaged children from Harrow aged at Key Stage 1 and 2. The young people assisted each conformed under the national 'narrowing the gap' definition of disadvantage. The project successfully surpassed its original objectives of 60 children and the project currently stands at about 100 children attending, who all are from the targeted groups, according to the national 'narrowing the gap' definition of disadvantage and a further 40 identified by schools on the waiting list. Initial results show that virtually all children have made progress during the autumn term.

For example in this academic year for children who attend the weekend school from Whitefriars' First & Middle 86% of children have gone up to at least the national curriculum expected level in English and Maths and 43% have gone up by above national curriculum expectations. This has meant the narrowing the gap children who attend the Harrow Weekend School (the school's most vulnerable groups) are now outperforming on average the rest of the school. Other mainstream provider schools have reported beneficiaries moving up sets, and parents have commented that children are 'catching, or have caught up with their peers.'

By effectively working across agencies Harrow has successfully reduced the number of permanent exclusions in Harrow from the 2008-2009 to 2009-2010 academic years by 28% (a reduction of 47 to 34 permanent exclusions). We have achieved this by providing a support programme to pupils with behaviour issues and giving additional interventions in English to the most vulnerable pupils. We have also reviewed the curriculum for relevancy and adapted teaching plans to be more inclusive of the different learning styles required by our pupils.

Our success in Narrowing the Gap in educational attainment of pupils in Harrow is largely down to our skilled teachers. To continue to raise knowledge, skills and confidence, Harrow Council has organised and delivered INSET and termly network days where practitioners from all services come together.

We can see and demonstrate evidence of the impact that our Narrowing the Gap programme is making.

For example in the academic year 2008/09 in Weald Middle, after a Narrowing the Gap Maths focus, 100% of black children reached level four in Maths. For all schools in the 2008/9 academic year in terms of English there was a 2% gap in value added improvement between Somali children and other EAL children in Narrowing the Gap Schools but a 12% point gap on a similar measure in non-narrowing the gap schools with large Somali cohorts. In this academic year Harrow High have reported that in Maths (the Narrowing the Gap focus area) Narrowing the Gap groups are outperforming the school average by 7 percentage points in terms of value added improvement.

Six schools were chosen to be involved in the Narrowing the Gap programme based on the extent of their gap between the target group and their capacity to take on board the required monitoring and evaluation. Each of these schools went on to achieve "Outstanding" judgements by OFSTED and the action taken by schools to narrow the gap has been a contributory factor.

In partnership with three neighbouring local authorities (Brent, Hillingdon and Hounslow) we have successfully received funding from London Challenge to fund a project focusing on the achievement of children on Free School Meals (specific target groups; White British boys, Somali and Black Caribbean pupils and Looked After Children). The project began in the spring term of 2010.

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There are currently, 31 primary and 8 High Schools involved in the LA's NtG Programme. This year the focus has been to narrow the FSM gaps while continuing to narrow the BME gaps.

The gap for Black Caribbean for English KS2 Level 4 closed this year, 81% compared to last year's 74% achieved level 4 thus closing the gap.

There is a big improvement for all NtG groups in 2010 as the following Harrow Key Stage 2 Data for Target Narrowing the Gap Groups shows:

KS2 2010 (2009 in brackets)

	Eligible for FSM	Not eligible for FSM	FSM (gap)	Black African	Black African (gap)	Black Caribbean	Black Caribbean (gap)
English	68% (60%)	86% (85%)	-18% (-26%)	75% (65%)	-7% (-14)	81% (74%)	-1% (-5)
Maths	62% (58)%	85% (84%)	-24% (-26%)	70% (60%)	-11% (-20)	68% (63%)	-13% (-17)

*These figures do not include children in special schools

NtG vs Non NtG

	FSM Eligible (nos & %)		FSM GAP	FSM Ineligible (nos & %)		Black African (nos & %)		Black African Gap	Black Caribbean (nos&%)		Black Caribb. Gap	All Pupils
English non Ntg Schools Total 2010	156	65%	-24%	979	88%	75	76%	-9%	57	82%	-3%	85%
English Ntg Schools Total 2010	231	70%	-15%	983	85%	12 3	75%	-7%	44	80%	-2%	82%
Maths nonNtg Schools Total 2010	156	57%	-30%	979	87%	75	68%	-15%	57	74%	-9%	83%
Maths Ntg Schools Total 2010	231	65%	-18%	983	83%	12 3	72%	-8%	44	61%	-18%	79%

Headlines: Narrowing the Gap (NtG)

For NtG schools in English & Maths the FSM gap was significantly lower (9% points lower English, 12% points lower Maths)

For NtG schools in English & Maths the Black African gap was lower (2% points lower English, 7% points lower Maths)

There have been a number of projects which have been highly successful and the following are two examples:

1) Dads Project:

The schools targeted Dads of children who were underachieving according to national curriculum expectations, in particular from ethnic minority groups who traditionally under achieve, such as Somali's, and also children who are on free school meals and therefore experiencing deprivation.

We looked at the children who went on the Dads Project and compared their attainment in the year of the Dads project and their attainment the previous year. In an academic year children in English are expected to go up 2/3 of a National Curriculum Level. As previously stated the targeted children were those who were underachieving which explains why there was such a low percentage of progress for that year.

Academic Year 2008/9 (Previous to Dads project)		Academic Year 2009/10 (The year of the Dads Project)	
% of Children on the Dads Project who achieved national curriculum expected progress	% of Children on the Dads Project who exceeded national curriculum expected progress	% of Children on the Dads Project who achieved national curriculum expected progress	% of Children on the Dads Project who exceeded national curriculum expected progress
15%	10%	73%	54%

It is clear that there was a dramatic improvement in progress for children who were involved on the Dads project. (73% achieving the expected progress compared to 15% the previous year). A second noticeable area of impact is that 54% of the children actually exceeded national curriculum expectations in that year and in doing so thus narrowed the gap in their underachievement. Some to the extent of completely catching up in their age related level of achievement. 23% of the children made the progress you would expect in two years over the single academic year of the Dads project.

Although schools are doing a number of interventions, there is no doubt the Dads project has contributed to this and had a real impact on attainment and increased motivation in the children and increased support from home has clearly had an impact on their education.

2) Harrow Weekend School –Impact on attainment in writing

We looked at the data in greater detail in writing. This was because we had more data available including previous year's attainment before the children went to the weekend school.

The table below illustrates the results in 2010. National curriculum expectations are that children make 2/3 of a level progress which means an average value added of 4 points.

<u>Writing</u>								
Harrow Weekend School	2010 Total No Of Children	No of Children up 1/3 level or more	% No of children up 1/3 level or more	2010 Number of children in group up two third of level or more	2010 % of children up two third of level or more	No of children up 1 level or more	% No of children up 1 level or more	2010 Average Value Added of children
All	115	105	91%	73	63%	51	44%	4.83
Children >70% attendance	43	41	95%	31	72%	20	47%	5.58
Children >50% attendance	86	81	94%	56	65%	30	35%	5.08
Non SEN	105	95	90%	58	55%	43	41%	4.64
SEN	18	18	100%	15	83%	11	61%	5.94
Somali	50	43	86%	25	50%	15	30%	4.69

Headlines

For all children 63% of attendees gained 2/3 of a level or more and the average value added was 4.83 points (2 points=1/3 of a sub level). This is greater than national curriculum expectations. For Harrow as a whole for EAL children 60% gain 2/3 of a level or more with an average value added of 4.42. Hence there was a slight improvement for children who attend Harrow Weekend School (HWS).

However for those children whose attendance was greater than 70% there was a significant improvement (72% of attendees gained 2/3 of a level or more and the average value added was 5.58.) For those children HWS was without doubt narrowing the gap.

In addition for SEN pupils HWS is making a real impact (86% of SEN pupils gain 2/3 of a level and the average value added was 5.94)

Furthermore children were referred to the weekend school because of their low attainment. Therefore we compared the attainment of the 70% attendee cohort with their attainment the previous year before they came to the school.

	2009/10 (Year of attending HWS)	2008/9 (Previous Year)
% no of children who made 2/3 of a level or more	72%	20%
Average Value Added	5.58	2.57

This was a fantastic improvement in results.

It is recognised that mainstream schools are doing a number of interventions to support these children but there is no doubt HWS has contributed significantly to this and is having a real impact on attainment in writing.

In conclusion, several more schools involved in LA's NtG programme have gone on to narrow their gaps and achieved outstanding OfSTED judgements. The results speak for themselves!

Financial Implications

The narrowing the gap initiatives have been mostly funded from the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG), a ring fenced grant mainly allocated to schools but with 15% retained to fund centrally led initiatives. The 2011/12 School Funding Settlement, announced in December, confirmed that from April 2011 the EMAG would cease as a ring fenced grant and the funding would be added to the general dedicated schools grant. Going forward schools will have full flexibility as to how they spend this funding which is likely to impact of the delivery of the Narrowing the Gap programme in the future. The allocation of this funding in 2011/12 will be considered by Schools Forum as part of setting the 2011/12 school budgets.

Performance Issues

These are outlined in the report.

Environmental Impact

N/A

Risk Management Implications

N/A

Corporate Priorities

This report relates to the Corporate Priority 'Improve Support for Vulnerable People'

Section 3 – Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Emma Stabler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 7 January 2011		

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

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