

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	15 February 2023
Title of Report:	School Attainment
Lead Member:	Councillor Charlotte Carlyle (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Children and Young People)
Lead Strategic Director:	Sharon Muldoon (Director for Childrens Services)
Author:	Annie Gammon
Contact Email:	Annie.gammon@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	Click here to enter text.
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

To provide a summary of the school attainment outcomes that have been provisionally published or shown in the regional data collection. The full national final data releases will not be available until at least late October.

Recommendations and Reasons

To note the summary set out in the report.

Report for information only.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Not applicable

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

This decision links to the Plymouth Plan: Policy HEA2 - Delivering the best outcomes for children, young people and families.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

None

Financial Risks

None

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

None

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

* When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.

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Appendices

*Add rows as required to box below

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Background papers:

*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Annie Gammon											

Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes

Date agreed: 03/02/2023

Cabinet Member approval: *Councillor Charlotte Carlyle*

Date approved: 06/02/2023

Plymouth Schools: key stage 4 outcomes (summer 2022)

At key stage 4, the attainment of young people in Plymouth demonstrated significant improvement from the last exam series for which results were published in 2019.

**Please note that in 2020 and 2021, examination results were not published due to the pandemic. This means that comparisons between years cannot be made and it is not possible to indicate trend.*

Key measures:

Progress 8 is a type of 'value-added' measure that indicates how much a secondary school has helped pupils improve (or progress) over a five year period when compared to a government-calculated expected level of improvement.

- A score of zero means that the school's pupils progressed at a rate in line with the average rate of progression of other children across the country who achieved similar results at the end of Key Stage 2.
- A score above zero means that school's pupils have progressed more than children across the country who achieved similar results at the end of Key Stage 2.
- A score below zero means that pupils made less progress than children across the country who achieved similar results at the end of Key Stage 2. A negative score does not mean there was no progress, but rather that pupils made less progress than at schools with higher scores.

Attainment 8 is a measure published annually showing the average academic performance of a secondary school. It is calculated by adding together pupils' highest scores across eight government approved school subjects.

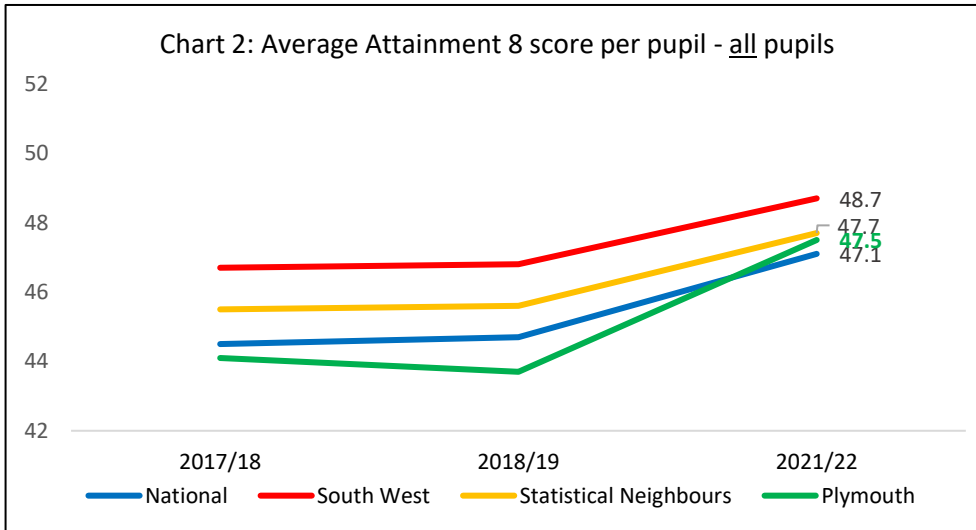
- Bucket 1 - English and maths, which are worth double marks, but English will only count for double marks if both English literature and English (ie English language) are taken. The higher grade of the two is used;
- Bucket 2 – The top three scores from the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects taken, i.e. sciences, computer science, history, geography and languages;
- Bucket 3 – The top three scores from remaining EBacc subjects or other government approved qualifications (e.g. other GCSEs or Level 2 Certificates in some technical subjects).

Grades are converted to points, and a formula is applied to calculate the school's attainment 8 score.

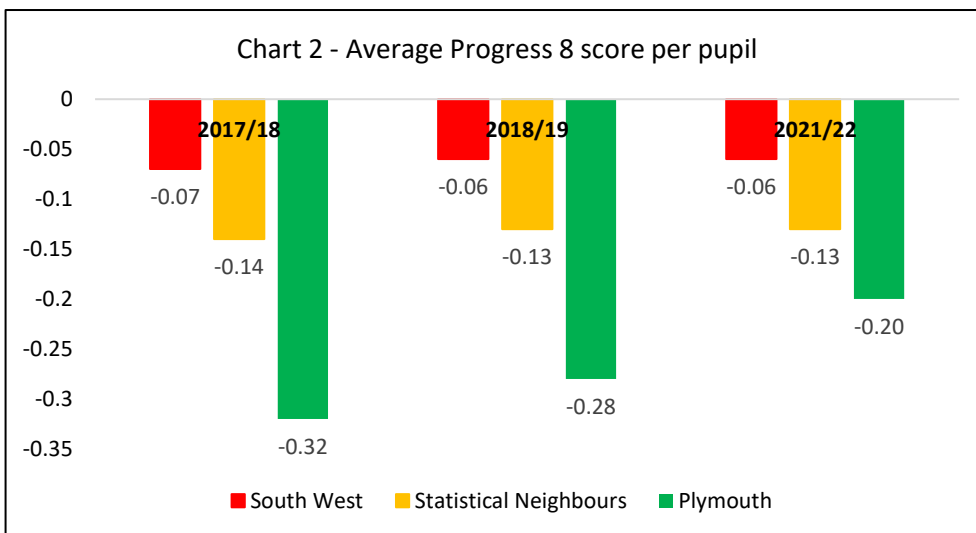
Basics - the percentage of students achieving grades 9 – 5 in English and maths (a strong pass).

Plymouth schools: performance

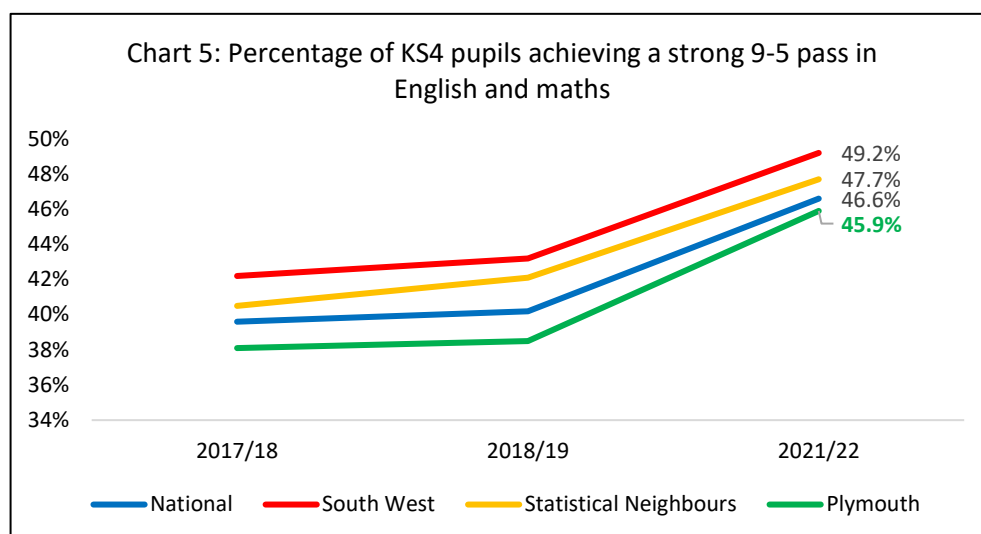
In the 2021/22 exam series, the performance of students in Plymouth matched the national benchmark for attainment 8 for the first time. The gap with regional and statistical neighbour benchmarks was also closed significantly.



In addition, the average progress 8 score for Plymouth students closed significantly with regional and statistical neighbour benchmarks. However, whilst students are making a greater amount of progress between years 7 and 11 than in previous years, they are still falling short by approximately a fifth of a grade across measured subjects.



In 2021/22, the number of students achieving the ‘basics’ measure significantly increased from 37.6% in 2018/19 to 45.9%, closing the gap with the national benchmark to 0.7%.



There are three significant drivers for this change across the Plymouth secondary education landscape. The first is the introduction of high performing multi-academy Trusts into the city (Reach South, Greenshaw, Thinking Schools & Ted Wragg) as well as the expansion of locally based Westcountry Schools Trust. The opportunity of joining a large high performing trust has offered school leaders the opportunity to develop curriculum, share resources and provide teachers with high quality professional development.

The second driver has been Plymouth's 'Place Based Approach'. Improving outcomes in English and maths is a focus of the 'place based' plan and increasing the amount of students achieving the 'basics' measure to at least 47% from a baseline 37.6% in 2019 is one of the key performance indicators. That 45.9% achieved of students this measure in 2022 indicates that city schools are on target to achieve this improvement in the 2023 series of examinations.

The final driver for change is the increasing the number of secondary schools graded as good or outstanding in the city. The inspection pause means that the last comparable point for published data is 2019 when 47% of secondary school were graded good or outstanding. This figure now stands at 67%.

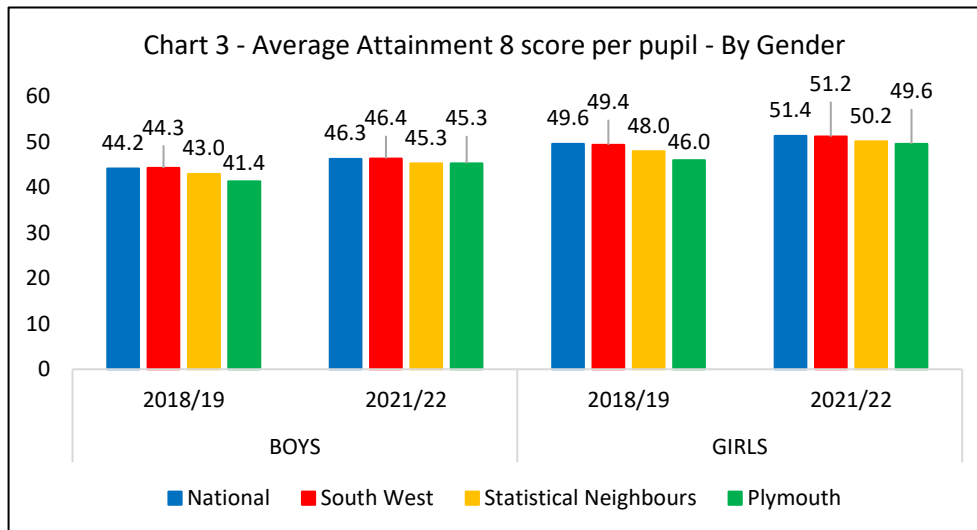
Ofsted category level analysis

Group	Progress 8	Attainment 8	Basics
Good & Outstanding	-0.04	51.8	55.1%
Requires improvement	-0.55	43.0	33.7%
Inadequate	-0.81	36.5	25.2%
Plymouth	-0.23	47.5	45.9%
National	0	47.4	46.6%

It is notable that those Plymouth schools rated good or outstanding outperformed national benchmarks for both the 'basics' and attainment 8 measures. This indicates the importance of strong

leadership in Plymouth schools. Through our 'place based' plan, city education leaders have set themselves the target of 70% of secondary school judged as good or outstanding by the end of this academic year. This figure currently stands at 67%, with an inspection judgement of an inadequate school pending publication and further secondary school inspections due by July 2023. In addition, the development of strong and sustainable school leadership in the city as a means to secure rapid improvement in schools is captured as a discreet strand of the 'place based' plan.

Gender level analysis



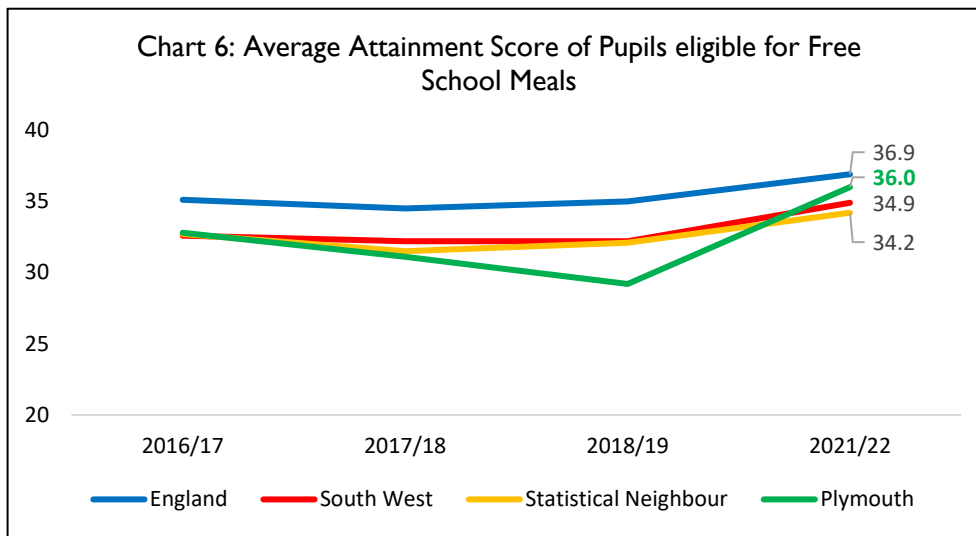
The achievement of both boys and girls against the attainment 8 measure has improved since the last published data point in 2019. It is notable that girls outperformed both Plymouth (47.5) and national (47.4) benchmarks for all pupils in the most recent exam series (49.6).

In addition, the performance gap between genders has remained broadly stable between data points and following this latest exam series, the gap (4.3) is smaller than national (5.4) and regional (5.2) figures.

The gap in girls' and boys' achievement is also reflected in the city's progress 8 scores (boys -0.34 & girls -0.05) and the 'basics' measure: 48.6% of girls and 43.2% of boys achieved a strong pass in English and maths in 2022.

The underperformance of boys relative to the performance of girls is a long term educational trend with national data available from the [previous 22 years](#). Plymouth's place based plan specifically recognises the need to address underperformance in boys at the earliest point by increasing achievement in key stage I writing as well as the number of boys passing the phonics check. At secondary level, school leaders will be aware of the performance of their cohort of boys and will plan appropriate intervention and strategies to increase outcomes.

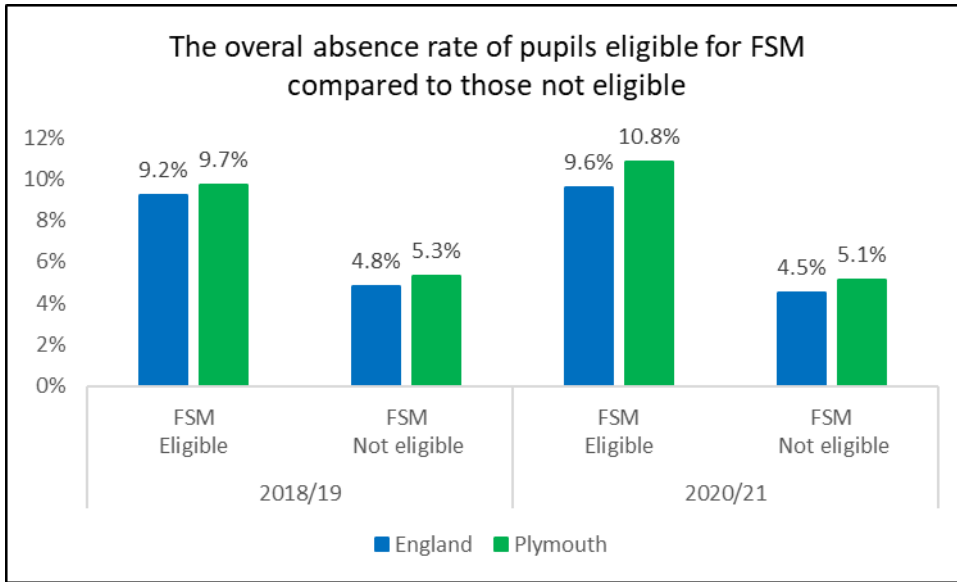
Free school meal level analysis



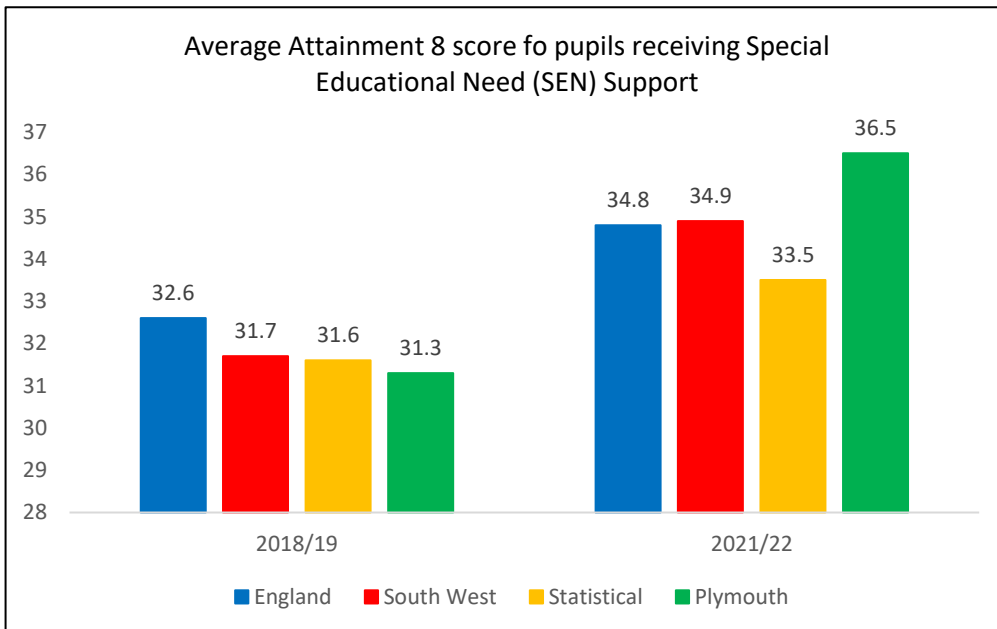
The attainment of those pupils in receipt of free schools meals (FSM) was better than regional and statistical neighbour benchmarks for the first time; Plymouth schools also closed the gap with the national benchmark significantly. However, as is reflected nationally, the gap in attainment between children in receipt of FSM and all children remains stubbornly high. Nationally this gap is 15 points and in Plymouth it is 14.5 points.

In terms of progress, although Plymouth pupils in receipt of FSM made better progress than statistical and southwest benchmarks for pupils in receipt of FSM; the cohort made significantly less progress than all Plymouth pupils (-0.69 Vs -0.20). Finally, only 25.4% of children in receipt of FSM achieved the 'basics' measure in comparison to the Plymouth benchmark of 45.9%.

Lower education performance is mirrored by lower rates of school attendance for this group. The absence rate gap between children eligible for FSM and all other pupils widened by 1.1% between 2018/19 (9.7%) and the last published data point in 2020/21 (10.8%). The overall absence rate for Plymouth pupils at the last published data point (2021/22) was 8.8%.

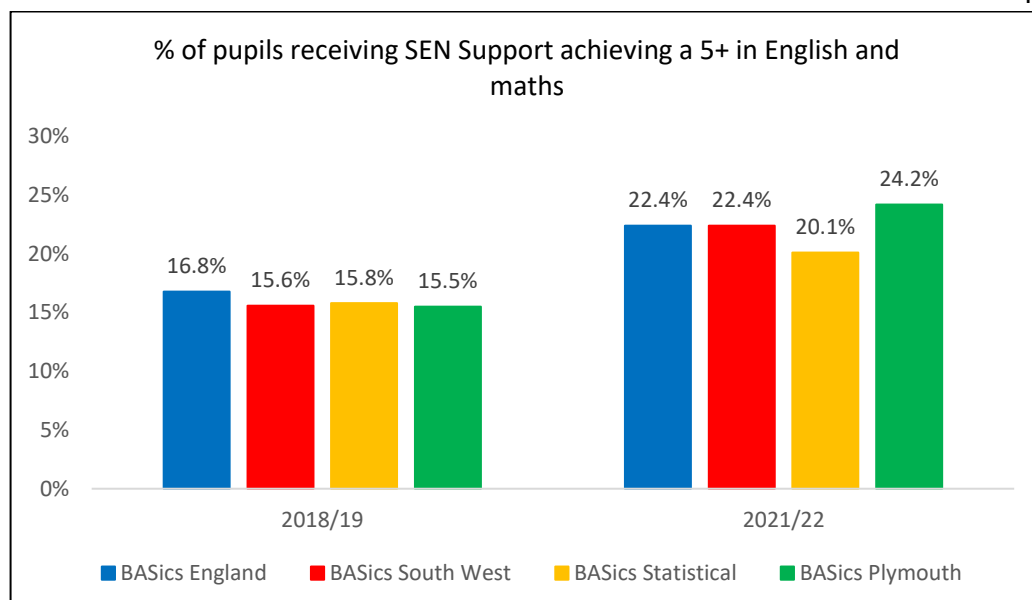


Children at SEN support



In the latest exam series, the attainment of children identified at SEN Support improved by 5.2 points from the last published data point and now stands above key benchmarks. Furthermore, the performance gap between pupils at SEN Support and the overall Plymouth benchmark remains broadly stable (12.4 points in 2019 and 11 points in 2022).

An improved picture is also reflected in the number of children achieving the ‘basics’ measure (15.5% in 2019 and 24.2% in 2022) and in progress 8 scores (-0.89 in 2019 and -0.53 in 2022). However, despite these encouraging signs, performance remains significantly below Plymouth and national benchmarks for all pupils.



Closing the gaps and improving performance

Improving school attendance

Absence rates in the city are higher than national benchmark and the gap is widening. Published data indicates that between 2020/21 and 2021/22 the overall absence rate in the city has increased 4.9% to 8.8%. In addition, the percentage of persistent absence in Plymouth schools (less than 90% attendance) is 6.7% above the national benchmark at 29%. In terms of the impact on attainment of Plymouth pupils in 2022:

- 58.7% of pupils who had more than 90% attendance achieved a strong pass in English and maths
- 30.7% of pupils who had less than 90% attendance achieved a strong pass in English and maths
- 3% of pupils who had less than 50% attendance achieved a strong pass in English and maths

Continuing to increasing the number of schools rated good or outstanding by Ofsted

The city's data demonstrates a clear correlation between good progress and attainment and those schools judged good or outstanding by Ofsted. This is an improving picture in the city, and the 'place based' plan, coupled with the strong governance provided by the Plymouth Education Board will ensure that momentum continues.

Improving the outcomes for vulnerable children

Reflecting national data, the city's data demonstrates that vulnerable children, including those in receipt of free school meals; those known to a social worker and those with special educational needs do not achieve as well as they should. Data also shows that this group of pupils are more likely to absent from school, more likely to be subject to suspension and/or exclusion, more likely to become electively home educated and more likely to move schools multiple times.

These themes are captured through a planned working party which has been commissioned through the 'place based' plan. Advert is currently out for an independent lead who will work with city education leaders on a number of key goals including:

- implementing a city wide inclusion policy
- improve attendance and reducing exclusions
- implementing a data led framework for improving inclusive practice.