

AMBITIOUS SCRUTINY

Narrowing the Gap Free School Meals versus Non- Free School Meals (based on 2012 data)

05/09/ 2013



Introduction

The Ambitious Scrutiny Panel has requested supplementary information following their meeting in August. This includes statistical and regional comparisons school by school analyses of key outcomes to help them identify good practice. Again the only nationally comparative data available for this summary paper relates to 2012 and we have included all the data sets that give an outcome for pupils entitled to FSM.

Analysis of performance

Plymouth LA compared to statistical neighbours (Annex A)

In reaching national expectations (level 4) at KS 2, the gaps in attainment for pupils entitled to free school meals show that Plymouth has the smallest gap in all areas where there is data available. This is the most significant analysis in that the other authorities face similar challenges in terms of social and economic deprivation. At KS4 the gap in FSM attainment for the percentage of pupils who achieve five good GCSE passes is also the smallest. When English and maths are added Plymouth's gap is the third smallest. Interestingly 34.1% of pupils entitled to FSM achieved this national expectation which is the second highest percentage amongst our statistical neighbours and the two LAs with smaller gaps had lower attainment levels.

Regional statistics

Comparisons with LAs across the region are a little more mixed as the characteristics of these areas vary considerably. However Plymouth's gaps still compare very favourably. The percentage of FSM pupils who meet the national expectation of achieving a Level 4 in both English and maths is still the smallest. In English the gap is the joint 3rd smallest and in maths it is the second smallest. At KS4 Plymouth's gap remains the smallest in comparison with SW LAs for the percentage of pupils getting five good GCSE passes. When English and maths are included Plymouth's gap is the 5th smallest out of 15 LAs.

Looked After Children 2012 outcomes

It has been more difficult to find LAC attainment but we can provide the following information in table format:

KS2	Cohort Size	% En Level 4+	% Ma Level 4+	% En & Ma Level 4+
England LAC	2020	60	56	50
South West LAC	140	60	56	51
Portsmouth LAC	10	67	50	50
Plymouth LAC	19	53	47	42

Cohorts vary considerably and the number of pupils with complex and special educational needs impacts on outcomes year on year.

KS4 2012	Cohort size	% 5 A*-C	% 5 A*-C(EM)
England LAC	4850	36.8	14.6
SouthWest LAC	450	29.8	12.1
Portsmouth LAC	20	31.8	X
Plymouth LAC	28	39.3	14.3

The data shows that in 2012 outcomes at KS2 were below averages and at KS4 they were in-line or above averages. Cohorts are so small that it is hard to draw reliable conclusions from the available data at cohort level.

School level data

A separate report will be available at the meeting as it contains sensitive information that is not available publically. The school data confirms that FSM pupils outperformed non FSM pupils in some schools, whilst in others there were significant gaps. The range at KS2 is from a gap of 87% to a positive gap of 23%. Again there is a need for caution as the school with a gap of 87% only had one pupil entitled to FSM in Y6. Cohort size is an important factor that must be considered.

Conclusion

The picture with further analysis continues to look extremely positive even though we would want all pupils entitled to FSM to achieve as well as every other pupil. It does appear that pupils entitled to FSM achieve better results in Plymouth than they might in just about any other LA in the SW and better than any other of the city's statistical neighbours. The school level data will point to the potential of further research with school's that have removed the attainment gap and to identify how they believe that they have achieved this. It is also important to remember that this report relates to just one academic year and cohorts change year on year.

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