

REPORT TO : POLICY AND REVIEW (PERFORMANCE) PANEL

REPORT BY : PADDY BRADLEY

DATE : 13th APRIL 2005

TITLE : PUPIL ACHIEVEMENT AT KEY STAGE 3 (age 14)

Purpose of Report

1. To inform the Policy and Review (Performance) Panel of the trend in pupil achievement at age 14 since 2000, the strategies implemented to raise standards and the impact of this area of work on relevant Corporate Plan targets.

Recommendations

2. The Policy and Review Panel is recommended to:
 - (i) note the anticipated improvement in results (paragraph 19);
 - (ii) support the proposed revision to the corporate plan targets of 77% attaining level 5 or higher in English and mathematics by 2008 (paragraphs 20 and 21); and
 - (iii) require officers to update the panel of progress once provisional national data is available for 2005.

Background

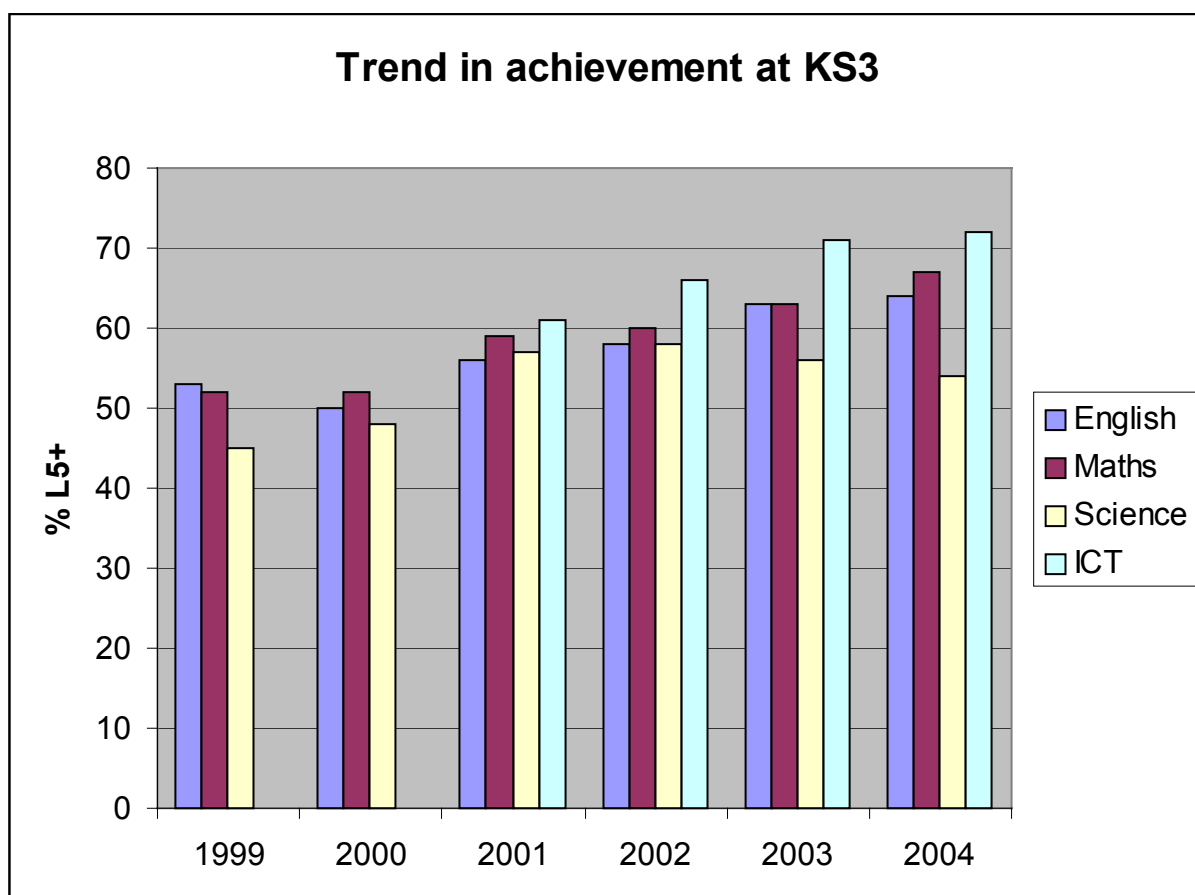
3. Key Stage 3 covers the first 3 years of a child's time at secondary school. In terms of the National Curriculum, this translates to Year 7 (age 12), Year 8 (age 13) and Year 9 (age 14).
4. At age 14, most pupils are assessed in subjects they have studied throughout Key Stage 3. In English, mathematics and science, pupils take externally marked tests. In all other subjects, teachers assess their pupils' achievements based on their performance in lessons and assignments. The expected level of attainment is level 5. A pupil achieving at level 6 or higher is attaining above age expectations.
5. Governing bodies set targets in English, mathematics, science and ICT approximately 18 months before they are to be achieved. For example, by 31st December 2004, governing bodies had set targets to be achieved at the end of Key Stage 3 in July 2006.
6. Schools' results in English, mathematics, science and ICT are reported against the statutory targets in these subjects.
7. In 2004, the national collation and analysis of results at Key Stage 3 were delayed due to technical problems with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's (QCA) website and a significant increase in appeals by schools against the marks awarded

to individual pupils, particularly in English. The publication of the data in March 2005 is 5 months later than usual.

8. Priory School in Portsmouth is still in dispute over its English results with the National Assessment Agency (NAA), which carries out the marking and collation for QCA.
9. There are 10 secondary schools, 4 special schools and 2 pupil referral units in which pupils are eligible to be assessed at the end of Key Stage 3.
10. One school, Admiral Lord Nelson, is part of a national trial to compress Key Stage 3 into 2 years instead of 3. At this school, pupils are assessed at the end of Year 8, whereas in all other schools in the LEA, pupils are assessed at the end of Year 9.

Commentary

11. The trend in achievement in English, mathematics, science and ICT is shown in the following chart:



There is an upward trend in results for English and mathematics. Since assessment in ICT was first reported in 2001, the LEA's results have shown a year on year increase, albeit a small one from 2003 to 2004. The results for science are poor and in a 3 year decline. This is an area of performance causing concern to the LEA and

schools. In this respect we mirror concerns at a national level where results are declining and the gains made in attainment over the years in science in primary schools are not translating in higher test results at age 14.

12. The comparison between 2003 and 2004 results and national averages is shown in the following table:

	LEA L5+	Change from 2003	EDP target	National L5+	Change from 2003
English	64%	1%	69%	71%	2%
Mathematics	67%	4%	68%	73%	2%
Science	54%	-2%	64%	66%	-2%
ICT	72%	1%	75%	NA	NA

It is a concern that no EDP or PSA targets were achieved (although mathematics is within 1 percentage point and ICT within 3 percentage points) and that optimism about an improvement in science results was not fulfilled. Only one school was within 1 percentage point of the target set for science, the other nine mainstream schools were at least 5 percentage points below their targets. In May 2004 nine out of ten schools forecast an increase in science results; the results show that only four of the ten schools improved.

13. At LEA and school level, there are difficulties in recruiting and retaining suitably qualified staff, particularly in science and ICT. The School Improvement Service (SIS) has generally maintained continuity in support to English and mathematics since 2001.
14. In science this was the case until 2003. Since July 2003, we have not employed a substantive adviser for science. An adviser did commence work in January 2004, but left within 4 months for personal reasons. Since then we have failed to appoint on 3 occasions. We have used our resources to employ consultants from other LEAs and targeted their support to the schools most in need. This has proved successful in the schools supported in this way. We have one adviser who is managing science support in addition to other jobs, including 3 days a week support to Miltoncross School. Although the science Heads of Department recently praised the adviser for his work in helping to improve achievement in the subject, this situation is stretching staff capacity to the limit. We need a single voice to lead the subject within the LEA. We have started a further recruitment drive, on this occasion looking to a secondment until March 2007, the date to which we are secure in our funding.
15. In ICT, we employed an adviser with a secondary school focus until December 2004. The adviser, in line with 4 other secondary advisers, was employed on a temporary contract. He left to take up a permanent post in Dorset. To date we have advertised and failed to recruit on 2 occasions. One adviser is providing support across the age range from 3 to 16 and a range of part-time consultants who constitute half a full-time post assists him. In addition, we are buying back time from the adviser who has moved to Dorset. We are following a similar route to science, advertising for a

seconded post until March 2007. The difficulties in providing consistent support to ICT are not as extreme as those in science, but the rate of improvement is at risk if we cannot strengthen our team in these important areas.

16. Although the number of teacher vacancies in the city has declined over the last 2 years, schools face the greatest difficulty in staffing mathematics, science and ICT departments with suitably qualified personnel.
17. Following the provisional results at both Key Stage 3 and GCSE in July and August 2004, the Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate was concerned about the discrepancy between what schools were forecasting they would achieve 5 months before the examinations and the actual results. The SIS has established a working group of headteachers and deputy headteachers led by the senior school improvement adviser – secondary. The group is developing guidance on best practice in tracking pupil progress in order to reduce the likelihood of wide gaps between anticipated and actual performance.
18. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has changed its approach to pupil achievement targets. Governing bodies now set targets entirely based on pupils' prior attainment and their knowledge of what progress pupils can make in their schools. This "bottom-up" approach replaces the requirement for schools' targets to aggregate up to an LEA target, which itself is determined by the LEA's contribution to the national target. The "top-down" approach has been dropped as national targets have not been reached and schools and LEAs did not have any sense of ownership of key performance targets.
19. The result is that from 2005, schools are setting more realistic targets. However, the targets are still in advance of current actual performance and anticipate a good upward trend in achievement. The following table shows anticipated performance in 2005 and 2006 in comparison with 2004 actual results and the corporate plan target for 2008.

	English		Mathematics		Science		ICT	
	5+	6+	5+	6+	5+	6+	5+	6+
Actual 2004	64	23	67	38	54	20	72	N/A
"Top down" target 2005	74.1	35	73.9	40	74.6	36	85.9	44
Revised target 2005	68	26	69	37	64	26	72	21
Target 2006	70.9	N/A	71.9	N/A	70.3	N/A	75.6	N/A
Corporate Plan 2008	80	N/A	80	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

20. The trajectory based on these targets falls short of the corporate plan education target relevant to this key stage. The target is "Raise attainment at all ages and reach national averages by 2008, including 45% getting 5+ A*-C at GCSE and 58% by 2008, 80% reaching level 5 at Key Stage 3 in maths and English by 2008". In a

review of performance against corporate plan targets, the Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate has suggested that the Key Stage 3 targets be reduced to 77% attaining level 5 or higher in English and mathematics.

21. To achieve 77% at level 5 or higher in English and mathematics by 2008 will require high rates of improvement that match the gains made in the early stages of the secondary strategy when the scope for increases was greater.