

## Raising Aspiration and Achievement Strategy

Cornwall's educational community believes that all our children and young people are entitled to the best possible life chances that we can give them through enhancing their access to the highest quality educational opportunities, underpinned by challenging aspirations to achieve not just their expected potential but beyond.

Currently, whilst we have been successful in many areas, we also accept that we are failing to deliver this for a significant number of our children and young people and outcomes across different institutions are too variable. This strategy focuses on a small number of specific priority areas where we are underperforming and aims to drive up standards so that Cornwall's performance is not merely average – or below average - in comparison to that of other local authorities but is outstanding, top quartile performance.

**Underpinning our whole philosophy is our approach to raising aspiration.**

Our role is to ensure that high aspirations for all children and young people are shared with families, common across all strands of education from Early Years to Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, Further and Higher Education institutions, and – supported by high quality and impartial Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) - enable young people to access appropriate careers which stimulate, enthuse and engage them. This will not only allow them to achieve personal goals but also to contribute effectively to their communities and the wider economy of Cornwall.

Of particular focus are our aspirations for our most able children and young people, who often fail to reach the highest grades at the end of primary school, at GCSE and A level, and thus are ultimately not in a position to compete effectively for places at the most prestigious universities. We are committed to reversing this situation.

In order to improve educational standards, the critical driver is the leadership of those standards in our schools, colleges and settings. High quality leadership is the most important factor in improving teaching and learning, attainment and progress. This includes not only senior and middle leadership of the agenda but also governance. Where managers and governors work in tandem to support and challenge each other effectively, the shared focus on outcomes lies at the heart of what they do and leads to a common goal being achieved.

### RAAS Priorities 2015/16

- 1** Enabling young people to engage with learning by improving their resilience and emotional wellbeing and improving engagement/support for families and carers
- 2** High aspirations for all young children and young people, particularly:
  - The most able
  - The most vulnerable
- 3** High quality leadership of standards:
  - a. Attainment and progress, of boys in all key stages
  - b. Attainment and progress in mathematics in all phases of education
  - c. Closing the gap for vulnerable groups, particularly Pupil Premium (FSM ever 6, Children in Care, Service children), Pupil Premium plus and pupils with Special Educational Needs with support or with statements or EHC plans.
    - Key Stage 3
    - Key Stage 4
    - Post-16
- 4** School organisation and sustainability for small schools
- 5** Pathways to employment.



In Cornwall, girls have achieved at or about the national average in many areas – whilst this in itself is not good enough (no-one should aspire to be average), it throws into even more stark relief the performance of boys, who have not kept up with the girls. Whilst we acknowledge that there is a national gender gap between the performance of girls and boys (the former doing better than the latter), in Cornwall that gap is significantly greater. Boys are falling behind in almost every subject area at GCSE, compared to the national picture, and are failing to achieve the expected levels of progress. For the last 3 years, boys’ progress has declined.

A further important element is the performance of vulnerable groups and the need for us to strive further to close the gap in their performance with that of their peers. We have always striven to support these children and young people. However, outcomes for some of these groups are not sufficiently high. Two groups which stand out are those pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN), but who do not have a Statement of Need, and pupils with English as an Additional Language. In both these cases, the performance of these pupils is not yet good enough. We are also mindful of other groups such as Children in Care, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils, and those in receipt of Free School Meals. Our aim is to close the gap for all of them.

Underpinning our approach to this strategy is an acknowledgement that we are working within a geographical context which provides its own challenges, with a proliferation of small schools, which experience particular complexities in relation to finance, curriculum and facilities. Our aim is to develop a clear, strategic approach to school organisation and sustainability for schools, with a framework which rationalises the range of options which the new educational landscape provides us with and identifies how we maximise the benefit and impact of these.

This strategy will be supported by an action plan, created in partnership with all stakeholders, which recognises not only the need for pace and mutual challenge but also the need for ensuring that improvements are embedded. We will focus on working smarter together, with the sum being greater than the individual parts. In regard to schools, it will aim to support schools to be self-evaluating and self-sustaining. It will capture, inter alia:

- an integrated Early Years Strategy to ensure all children have an aspirational start in life which firmly underpins all that follows
- a structured approach to using the range of expert support available e.g.

- National Leaders of Education (NLEs) / Local Leaders of Education (LLEs) / National Leaders of Governance (NLGs), Teaching Schools, peer school-to-school / setting / college support, local authority School Improvement Team, external providers
- an integrated approach to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) across all partners to ensure that resources are jointly focused on the priorities identified above
- a mechanism for capturing and celebrating good practice, which all schools, settings and colleges can share
- a vehicle for ensuring that wider work done with vulnerable groups shares common targets for raising aspirations and achievement eg Troubled Families, Young Mums Will Achieve.

This is the start of a new chapter which will end with Cornwall being not average but amongst the best in supporting its children and young people to be the best they can be educationally.

