

**Growth in Free School Meals
Appendix 1**

Original Recommendation	Agreed response and update																																							
<p>The LA must ensure the deployment of funding assigned to meeting the needs of children eligible for FSM is effective, embraces identified best operating practice and ensures all Stockport schools are inclusive and enhances education for all pupils.</p>	<p>Stockport has continued to provide training to school leaders which focused upon the needs of Disadvantaged children. This has specifically related to attendance, reading and core skills for our youngest children. In our high schools, colleagues have also completed a piece of work using the recommendations from the Education Endowment Foundation to examine the use of the Pupil Premium in School. The impact of this work has been pleasing. See the table below for the improvements in our outcomes at the end of last academic year.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="837 580 1816 1145"> <thead> <tr> <th>Measure</th> <th>July 2022</th> <th>July 2023</th> <th>National 2023</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Good Level of Development at age 5</td> <td>45.2%</td> <td>47.5%</td> <td>52.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Phonics Year 1</td> <td>59.4%</td> <td>64.8%</td> <td>67%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reading Year 2</td> <td>48.3%</td> <td>49.6%</td> <td>54%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Writing Year 2</td> <td>38%</td> <td>40.5%</td> <td>44.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Maths Year 2</td> <td>47.7%</td> <td>52.6%</td> <td>55.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reading progress from KS1-2</td> <td>-0.21</td> <td>-0.13</td> <td>-0.86</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Writing progress in from KS1-2</td> <td>-0.53</td> <td>-0.26</td> <td>-0.69</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Maths progress from KS1-2</td> <td>-0.57</td> <td>-0.69</td> <td>-1.05</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>At GCSE the most accurate comparator is with 2019 when children last completed full examinations. 48.1% of disadvantaged young people achieved a standard pass in English&Maths, an increase of 8% from 2019. 26.1% achieved a strong pass in both subjects, which is an increase 5%</p> <p>Whilst these outcomes are largely showing an improvement it should be recognised that attainment in Stockport remains below the national average achieved by this group children national in the primary phase. National comparisons are not yet available for high school measures, but it is likely that this will be similar.</p>				Measure	July 2022	July 2023	National 2023	Good Level of Development at age 5	45.2%	47.5%	52.1%	Phonics Year 1	59.4%	64.8%	67%	Reading Year 2	48.3%	49.6%	54%	Writing Year 2	38%	40.5%	44.5%	Maths Year 2	47.7%	52.6%	55.9%	Reading progress from KS1-2	-0.21	-0.13	-0.86	Writing progress in from KS1-2	-0.53	-0.26	-0.69	Maths progress from KS1-2	-0.57	-0.69	-1.05
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	<p>Work is continuing through our accountability conversations with school leaders, through our attendance service and through our training programme to schools to raise the profile of this group for our school leaders</p>
<p>The LA and its schools should consider the possibility of investing in systems that would support schools to identify all the children entitled to FSM to enable them to secure as much funding as possible.</p>	<p>Some consideration of the additional SIMS module has continued and the number of schools using it continues to grow. However it does not fundamentally bring equity across the system. Stockport is involved in a GM wide discussion about auto-enrolling, where an example of best practice is being evaluated and considered. Further local discussions may follow, rather than pursuing the original suggestion of the SIMS solution.</p>
<p>That officers undertake further work to understand what if any issues there are in relation to access to free school meals within Early Years settings and post -16 (16- 18 year olds). hat officers undertake further work to understand what if any issues there are in relation to access to free school meals within Early Years settings and post -16 (16- 18 year olds).</p>	<p>The Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance (April 2023) clearly states that the entitlement to free school meals (FSM) only applies to children in maintained schools, including the extended eligibility criteria for those in reception, Years 1 and 2. Academies and free schools are required to follow the FSM legislation as if it applied to them by virtue of their funding agreements. FSM requirements do not apply to children in the private, voluntary or independent sector. Locally there have been some occasions where we have provided additional support, for example to Afghan evacuees who attended one or PVI settings, but these are the exception. Given this position we have explored other ways of supporting our early years settings. We are currently bringing a group of leaders/managers to work with a senior officer to develop a bespoke Early Years Poverty Proofing process, in conjunction with Children North East. Whilst this will not deal with the issue at source it may help providers better support these children and families.</p>
<p>Consideration should be given to the way in which food providers who support schools at lunchtime consider the impact of their practice upon children entitled to FSM.</p>	<p>Further evidence has emerged through recent Poverty Proofing audits which has confirmed the view that there are several different ways in which the practice of providers has an impact upon Disadvantaged children. It has also shown that schools have been able to overcome these at times. The evidence has also revealed that this applies to more than one provider. We are therefore planning to meet with them collectively and use the evidence from the audits to begin a conversation which we hope will result in practice change. In the meantime, LA officers continue to share the ideas of mitigation with school leaders as appropriate.</p>
<p>To endorse the Poverty Proofing/Local Matters approach as a way forward with an expectation that all schools should engage with the project.</p>	<p>The Poverty Proofing Project continues to grow. By the end of this academic year we will have worked with 36 schools. We are undertaking our first audit in a high school in November 2023 and we are hopeful that this will stimulate interest in others. We are also delighted with the interest that has been shown by our early years providers – see above. Schools continue to discuss the impact the project has upon their culture, leadership and their practice.</p>

subject to agreement at Full Council in February to work with school leaders to implement the Stockport Cost-of-Living Free School Meals Guarantee. as outlined at 6.2 of this report.

The Stockport School Meal Support Scheme was developed following Council decision to extend Free School Meals in Stockport for the 2023/24 academic year,.

The scheme provides eligible Stockport children living in low-income households who wish to receive support with a paid-for school/college meal each day of term. The eligibility criteria for the scheme is:

- Child lives in Stockport;
- Child lives in a household in receipt of Local Council Tax Support and/or Housing Benefit;
- Child is aged between 7 and 18 years inclusive at the beginning of the academic year and attending a school or college (including schools or colleges outside Stockport), and
- Child is not eligible for the nationally-funded Free School Meal (FSM) scheme.

The scheme has been delivered in partnership with schools and colleges in the borough and outside Stockport. Parents/carers of children who Council records showed were likely to be eligible for support were contacted with details of the scheme and provided with a link to the online request for support form. Received requests were then triaged to ensure eligibility. Each setting was provided with a list of their children who had been enrolled onto the scheme to ensure they received a paid-for meal funded by the Council on the first day of term.

The scheme went live in September with the Council working with over 150 schools and colleges. From September over 900 children are benefiting from the scheme and receiving a paid-for school/college meal. A further 180 children have been enrolled on to the scheme from the first day of school after the October/November half term.

The Council is committed to ensuring all eligible children can benefit from the scheme over the academic year. Eligible children identified during the year who request support will be enrolled on to the scheme on a rolling basis.

The Stockport Council School Meal Support Scheme is approved to be funded by the Council for the 2023/24 academic year. Given the financial challenges facing the Council over the medium term the scheme cannot continue to be funded beyond this. For the scheme to continue and be sustainably funded an external funding source needs to be identified.

