



## Continued high performance in the county's schools

It has been another good year for education in Hertfordshire with results being maintained or improving at all key stages. There has been particularly good improvement at the foundation stage (children aged 0 to 5 years), and also at key stage 4 (15/16 year olds) where results improved for the fifth year running. In 2008/09, 138 (78%) schools and early years settings were judged good or outstanding; attendance has improved, exclusions reduced and the majority of schools now meet the full core offer for extended activities. The county is also on track to reach the 2010 target of 82 children's centres<sup>1</sup>.

For many vulnerable groups, the gap between their achievement and that of all children is reducing. The gap for some however remains unacceptably wide and narrowing the gap remains a key priority.

A total of 137 primary schools were inspected during 2008/09, the fourth year of short notice Ofsted inspections. The outcomes improved significantly this year in most aspects. The proportion of schools judged to be outstanding, which had been below the national figure in 2007, rose by 17%. In terms of overall effectiveness 33% were judged as outstanding compared to 13% nationally and 80% were judged to be good or outstanding compared to 63% nationally. No school was judged to be inadequate compared to 4% nationally.

'Throughout the school, teaching is consistently good and has many outstanding features. Teaching and support staff work seamlessly together and in this highly positive learning environment, pupils respond readily to the encouragement and guidance they receive.'

Ofsted, June 2009

Of the 28 secondary schools inspected by Ofsted in 2008/09, eight were given a higher grade for overall effectiveness than in their previous inspection, and two a lower grade, with the rest receiving the same grade (including four schools judged as outstanding). Overall, eight were judged to be outstanding, nine good and 11 satisfactory. Of all 82 Hertfordshire secondary schools, by the end of the 2008/09 academic year, 18 were judged to be outstanding, 36 good and 27 satisfactory (one school closed to become an academy in August 2009).

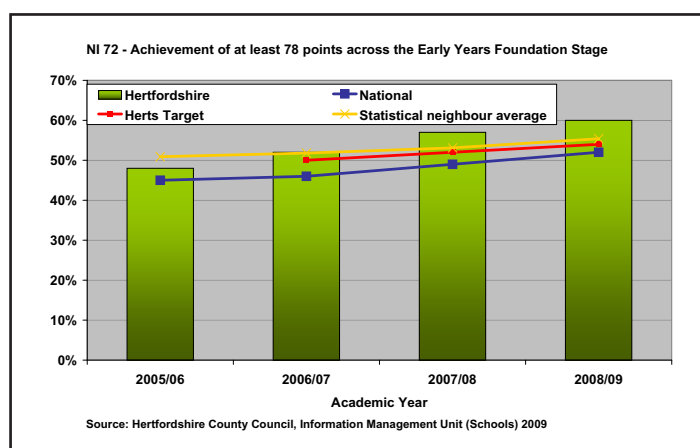
## NI 72 - Achievement of at least 78 points across the early years foundation stage (EYFS) with at least six points in each of the scales in personal social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy

The early years are crucial to a child's chances of success in both future education and in later life. NI 72 uses the results of the early years foundation stage profile – an assessment of children's achievement at the end of the academic year in which they turn 5 – to measure the performance of the schools and private, voluntary and independent sector organisations that provide education for 0 to 5 year olds in a local authority area.

Children are assessed against 13 different scales that cover six areas of learning:

- personal, social and emotional development
- communication, language and literacy
- problem solving, reasoning and numeracy
- knowledge and understanding of the world
- physical development
- creative development

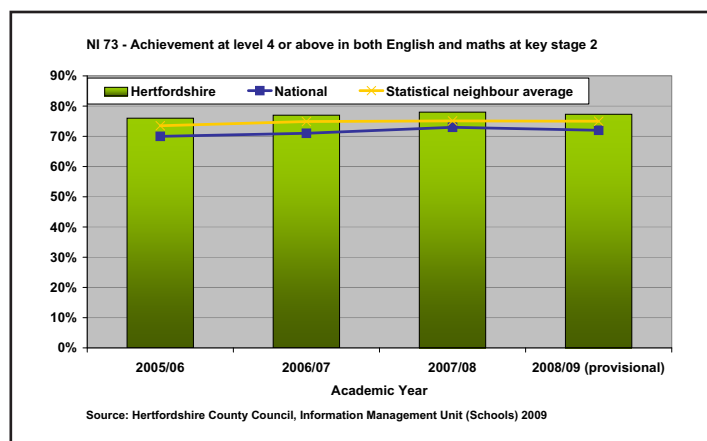
Performance in Hertfordshire against this indicator continued to improve in 2008/09, due mainly to a range of targeted programmes and initiatives including consultant visits and good use of data analysis by all practitioners<sup>2</sup> working with 0 to 5 year olds. To improve performance and work towards meeting a 2009/10 target of 60.5%, work will focus on continuing the range of initiatives and extended training programmes to support areas of the early years foundation stage profile where results were less good (see Hertfordshire's Children and Young People's Plan<sup>3</sup> priority 6 for further details). The particular emphasis for the coming year will be on boys achievement to narrow the gap.



## NI 73 - Achievement at level 4 or above in both English and maths at key stage 2

Hertfordshire's results for pupils at the end of the primary phase are well above national averages. In 2009, 77% of pupils achieved level 4+ in combined English and maths, the key national benchmark. This was 5% above the national average. As well as achieving high results, Hertfordshire pupils also made good progress between key stages 1 and 2. The expected two levels of progress in English and in maths was achieved by 84% of pupils.

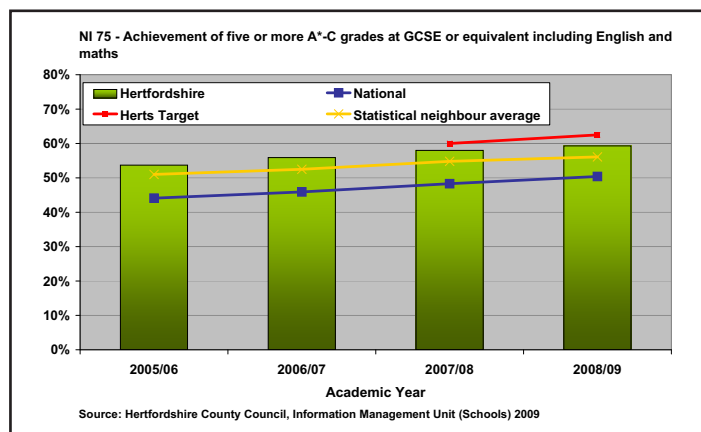
Focus in 2009/10 will be on targeted programmes of support to improve attainment in the lower performing schools including: the national 'Improving Schools Programme' (ISP); 'towards outstanding programme' (TOP – a Hertfordshire devised programme); tailored continuous professional development and targeted consultancy support.



## NI 75 - Achievement of five or more A\*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and maths

Performance continues to improve resulting from an enhanced focus by both schools and the local authority in this area. Significant resources have been allocated to securing improvements in core subjects through the work of consultants, advisers and intervention programmes. In terms of 5 A\*-C including English and maths, 59.2% of students achieved the benchmark – an improvement of 1.3% in comparison to 2008. This is well above the national average of 50.4%. In 11 schools these results improved by more than 10%.

Results at key stage 4 overall continue to show significant improvement against the statutory indicators. The percentage of students achieving 5 A\*-C in any GCSE subject improved to 73.7% in



comparison to 70.7% in 2008. This compares to a national figure of 69.2%.

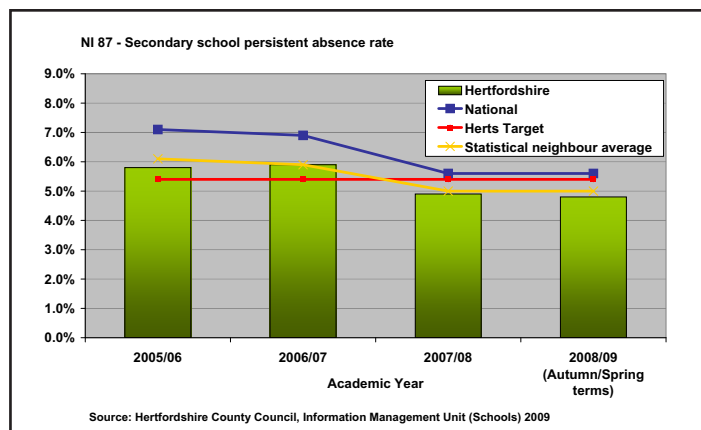
## NI 87 - Secondary school persistent absence rate

The reduction in persistent absence remains a key focus for Hertfordshire in line with the central government Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) priorities. All local authorities are required to reduce levels of persistent absence in secondary schools to no more than 5% by 2010/11.

'Attendance has improved significantly as a result of the school's robust procedures. The vast majority of students enjoy school and attend regularly.'

Ofsted, February 2009

A child is considered to be a persistent absentee if their absence from school is 20% or more whether authorised or unauthorised. Over the last three years the rate of persistent absence in Hertfordshire reduced from 5.9% to 4.8% with a 0.6% decrease being made in 2008/09. The National Strategies have judged Hertfordshire to be outstanding in the progress that has been made.



## Good to Outstanding (G2O)

Hertfordshire schools perform very well in relation to all the Ofsted inspection criteria, consistently produce results above the national average, and the trend is one of sustained improvement. In 2007/08 the proportion of good or better schools in Hertfordshire was above the national average, but the percentage of Hertfordshire primary schools that were outstanding was below the national average – 11% in Hertfordshire compared to 13% nationally.

In response to this data the Good to Outstanding project was set up. The purpose of the project was to increase the proportion of primary schools judged by Ofsted to be outstanding overall, and also to increase the proportion of schools judged to be good with outstanding features.

***“The leadership of the local authority G2O project team is outstanding.” National Strategies, 2009***

The project has been highly effective in supporting headteachers to secure school improvement. Heads view the project as innovative – supporting their learning whilst respecting their autonomy; it gives them the confidence to work differently.



## Extended schools

Extended schools work in partnership to provide access to a range of additional services to improve children’s achievement and life chances. The core services that extended schools provide are:

- childcare
- parenting – including access to information and advice for parents and carers and family learning sessions
- referral to specialist services including speech therapy, child and adolescent mental health services, and intensive behaviour support
- study support and out of school hours learning – for example mentoring and homework clubs, volunteering, breakfast clubs and after school activities in arts, drama, music and sport
- community access to sports, arts and ICT facilities and adult learning programmes

Across Hertfordshire, the rollout of extended schools is well underway with 38 consortia set up involving over 500 schools. By September 2010, all schools will be providing access to the full core offer of extended services. For further details visit [www.hertsextendedschools.org.uk](http://www.hertsextendedschools.org.uk)

## Making Good Progress

During the spring and summer terms of 2009 Hertfordshire took part in the national Year 5 and Year 6 early roll out of the ‘Making Good Progress’ one-to-one tuition programme. The programme is aimed at:

- pupils who entered the key stage below age related expectations and/or
- pupils who are falling behind trajectory during the latter stages of a key stage and/or
- children looked after who would particularly benefit from this support.

***“From a very early stage, we could see the impact on the children’s growth in confidence.” Headteacher***

A data tracking system was developed as part of the pilot to monitor the progress and outcomes of tuition. This allowed schools to track the progress of pupils who participated. The tracker information allows the analysis of vulnerable groups at both school and local authority level. From September 2009 onwards this will be used by all schools.

Initial impact data indicates that the one-to-one tuition supported accelerated progress for the majority of pupils who took part.

***“It’s only one hour, and you can learn a lot in that hour!” Year 6 pupil***

1 The Government is establishing a network of Sure Start children’s centres, providing good quality childcare integrated with early learning, family support, health services, and support for parents wanting to return to work or training.  
[www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters)

2 Across children’s services, “practitioner” is a generic term used to refer to anyone who works directly with children, young people or families and whose primary role is to use a particular expertise or professional skill to help promote children’s and young people’s well-being.

3 Children and Young People’s Plan 2009-2011 is available from [www.hertsdirect.org/childrenstrust](http://www.hertsdirect.org/childrenstrust)