



Report to CYP&FS Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee Monday 12th March 2018

Report of: Chief Executive – Learn Sheffield

Subject: Curriculum offer at key stage 3

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Summary:

This report has been requested by the Scrutiny Committee and provides an overview of the current key stage 3 curriculum in Sheffield schools.

Type of item: The report author should tick the appropriate box

Reviewing of existing policy	
Informing the development of new policy	
Statutory consultation	
Performance / budget monitoring report	
Cabinet request for scrutiny	
Full Council request for scrutiny	
Community Assembly request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	✓
Other	

The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:

The Committee is asked to consider the report and provide views and comments.

Background Papers:

Department for Education information on the secondary curriculum

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/381754/SECONDARY_national_curriculum.pdf

Briefing paper from House of Commons Library: The school curriculum in England

researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06798/SN06798.pdf

Ofsted report: 'Key Stage 3: the wasted years?'

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/459830/Key_Stage_3_the_wasted_years.pdf

Category of Report: OPEN

Report of the Chief Executive of Learn Sheffield –

Curriculum offer at key stage 3

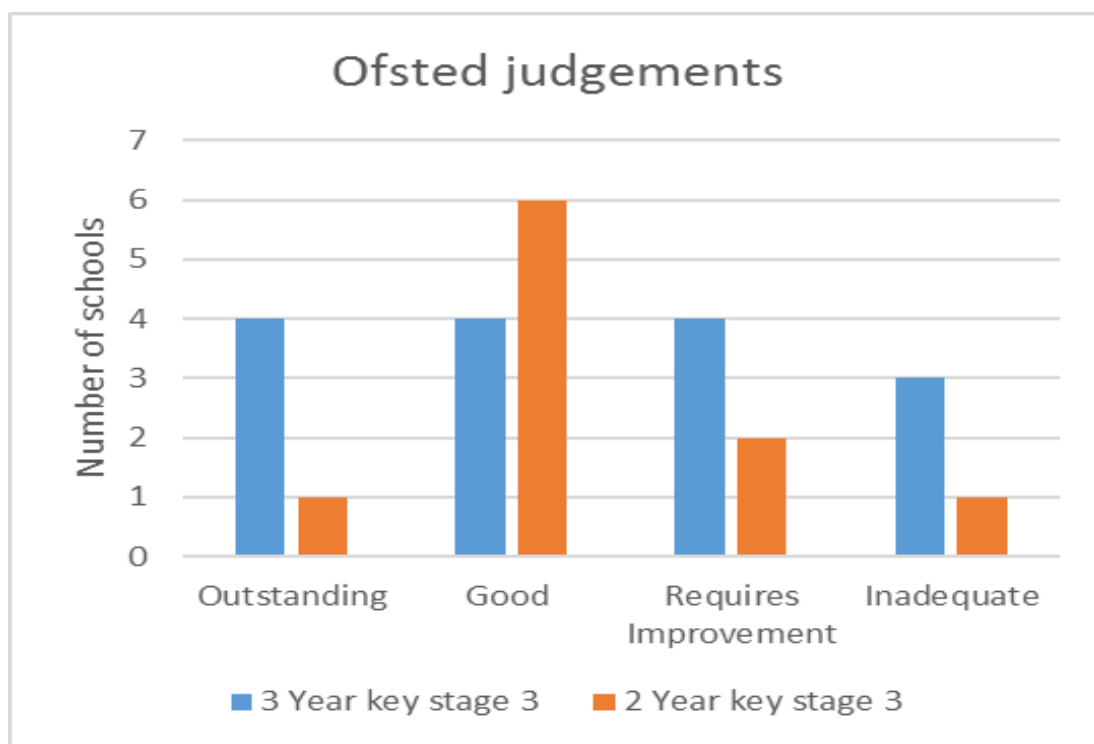
1. Introduction

- 1 This report has been requested by the Scrutiny Committee and provides an overview of the current key stage 3 curriculum in Sheffield schools.
- 1.1 The Department for Education produced the most recent guidance on secondary national curriculum in December 2014. The related programmes of study, i.e. what each subject should deliver, were last updated in September 2013.
- 1.2 The statutory guidance provided by the Department for Education applies to local authority maintained schools only. All secondary schools in Sheffield are now academies or are in the process of becoming academies, and as such are free to set their own curriculum. Academies are required to offer a broad and balanced curriculum, details of which are contained in their funding agreements.
- 1.3 The increased autonomy available to schools has led to different approaches to the delivery of the key stage 3 curriculum. This is not a new phenomenon. Some grant maintained schools, and more recently foundation schools, introduced different curriculum models over the period of the last two decades.
- 1.4 Currently, the national approach to the delivery of the secondary curriculum can be divided into two broad categories. Some schools continue to deliver the key stage 3 curriculum over three years, and others now deliver it over two years. The rationale behind this is to provide increased time for key stage 4; giving Year 9 over to the study of GCSE qualifications can provide an increase of 55% in curriculum time. The converse argument to this is that less time is spent on the foundations underpinning the key stage 4 curriculum. Research reports reflect these competing schools of thought. Nevertheless, since the abolition of national testing in Year 9, the number of schools following the two-year model has increased.
- 1.5 There are currently no indicators in the performance tables linked to key stage 3. National curriculum 'levels' were abolished in 2013 and schools encouraged to consider assessment without levels.
- 1.6 A report by Ofsted in September 2015 reviewed the effectiveness of key stage 3. It concluded that key stage 3 needed to be a higher priority in all aspects of school planning, monitoring and evaluation. It emphasised the importance of better partnerships with primary schools to inform transition that is more effective. It also highlighted the need for high quality homework and robust systems of assessment.

2. Sheffield Context

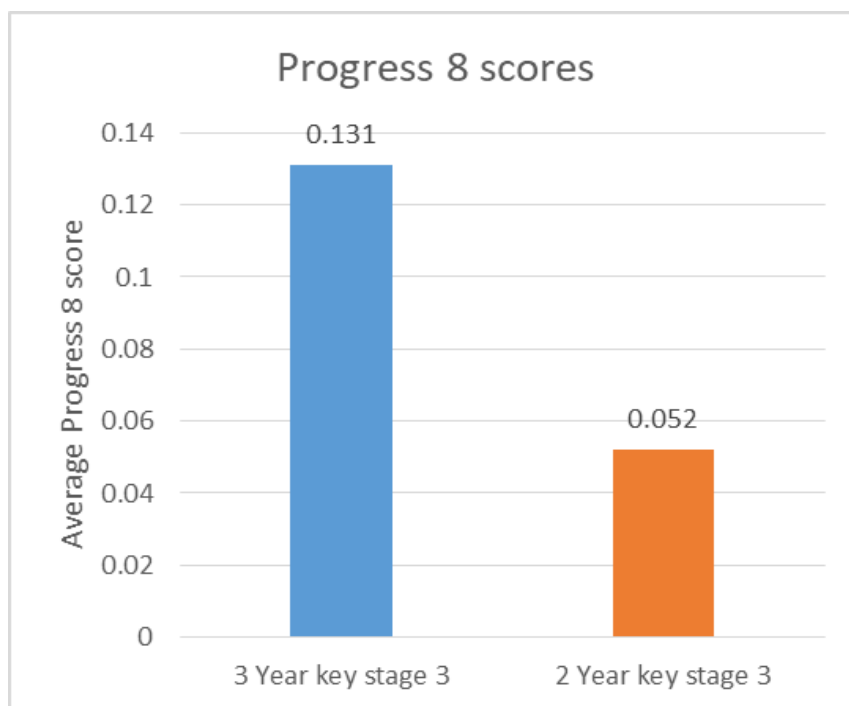
- 2.1 There are currently 25 secondary schools in Sheffield providing a key stage 3 curriculum. By their very nature, the two University Technical Colleges in the city do not provide key stage 3 provision.

- 2.2 Subjects included by all schools include English, mathematics, science, art & design, citizenship/personal social health education, computing, design and technology, languages, geography, history, religious education and physical education.
- 2.3 The allocation of curriculum time to different subjects varies from school to school and is a function of the length of lessons and the school day. English mathematics, and science consume around half of the curriculum time available.
- 2.4 There is some difference in the provision of some arts-related subjects. The vast majority of schools offer music, many offer drama and a minority offer dance.
- 2.5 Forty percent of the schools currently run a two-year key stage 3 programme. Of those that do not, many use Year 9 as preparation for GCSE courses. There is not a clear pattern, in terms of either context or geography, to describe the division of the schools against the two models.
- 2.6 Analysis of school performance by Ofsted grading is shown below.



- 2.7 The information shows the proportion of those schools with a two-year key stage 3 currently graded as good or outstanding is 70%. For those with a three-year key stage 3, the corresponding figure is 53%, although it does include four of the five institutions graded to be outstanding.

2.8 Analysis of school performance by Progress 8 score is shown below.



2.9 The average Progress 8 score for schools using a three-year key stage three model is higher than those of other schools. The data underlying both groups shows significant variation.

2.10 The two indicators of school performance are contradictory and no firm conclusions can be made.

3. Recommendation

3.1 The Committee is being asked to consider this report and provide views and comments.