

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**EDUCATION, LIBRARIES AND LOCALISM CABINET PANEL
TUESDAY, 6 FEBRUARY 2018 AT 10:00AM**

STANDARDS AND QUALITY IN HERTFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS

Report of the Director of Children's Services

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1. Purpose of report

To provide Members with an overview of standards and quality in Hertfordshire schools, Children's Centres and Early Years providers for the academic year September 2016 to July 2017. The report presents evidence from inspections, test and examination results and other assessments.

2. Summary

- 2.1 In the academic year 2016/17, Hertfordshire results indicate sustained high standards across all key stages in comparison with national and statistical neighbour outcomes. Performance for the key attainment indicators remains in the top quintile for all local authorities in England for all secondary school indicators except two and some Key Stage 1 and 2 indicators. In total, performance is in the top quintile for the vast majority of key indicators.
- 2.2 For many vulnerable groups, the gap between their achievement and that of all children is closing but for some it remains very wide, particularly for disadvantaged children, those on free school meals (FSM) and Children Looked After (CLA). In 2017, the attainment of disadvantaged groups in Hertfordshire is in line with, or above, the attainment of similar groups nationally. In some cases the gap between these groups and those deemed not to be disadvantaged has narrowed, whilst the gaps nationally have widened. However, for other indicators the gap between these groups and those deemed not to be disadvantaged has widened, in line with what has happened nationally.
- 2.3 At the end of the academic year 2016/17, a higher percentage of Hertfordshire schools were judged good and outstanding in their Ofsted inspections than the national figure. The percentage of schools judged outstanding, was also higher than the national proportion. The percentage of Hertfordshire schools in an Ofsted inadequate category was lower than the national figure.

3. Recommendation

3.1 The Panel is invited to note and comment upon the report.

4. Background

4.1 The creation of Herts for Learning Ltd in September 2013 put in place robust arrangements to ensure that the County Councils statutory duties for school improvement were effectively fulfilled, whilst retaining provision for non-statutory support to schools and settings through a traded offer.

4.2 As Herts for Learning Ltd is owned by Hertfordshire schools and the Local Authority, the company embodies a shared moral purpose and passion for continued improvement in outcomes for all Hertfordshire children and young people.

4.3 In 2013, Ofsted introduced an inspection framework for local authorities to evaluate their arrangements for fulfilling their statutory duties to promote high standards in schools and other providers so that children and young people achieve well and fulfil their potential (as defined by section 13A of the Education Act 1996). This includes support for schools causing concern as set out in Part 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. This framework was revised in September 2015, however changes made were minimal.

4.4 Not all local authorities will be inspected to a regular cycle or interval. Where inspections of schools or other providers raise concerns about the effectiveness of a local authority's education functions or where Ofsted become aware of other concerns, an inspection may be carried out. Ofsted has also stated that they may inspect local authorities to gather evidence of good practice.

4.5 A local authority may be inspected where one or more of the following apply:

- where the proportion of children who attend a good or outstanding school is lower than that found nationally,
- where there is a higher than average number of schools in an Ofsted formal category of concern and/or there are indicators that these schools are not improving rapidly enough,
- where there is a higher than average proportion of schools that have not been judged to be good by Ofsted,
- where attainment levels across the local authority are lower than that found nationally and/or where the trend of improvement is weak,
- where rates of progress, relative to starting points, are lower than that found nationally and/or where the trend of improvement is weak,
- where pupils eligible for the pupil premium achieve less well than pupils not eligible for the pupil premium nationally,
- where qualifying complaints to Ofsted about schools in a local authority are a matter of concern,

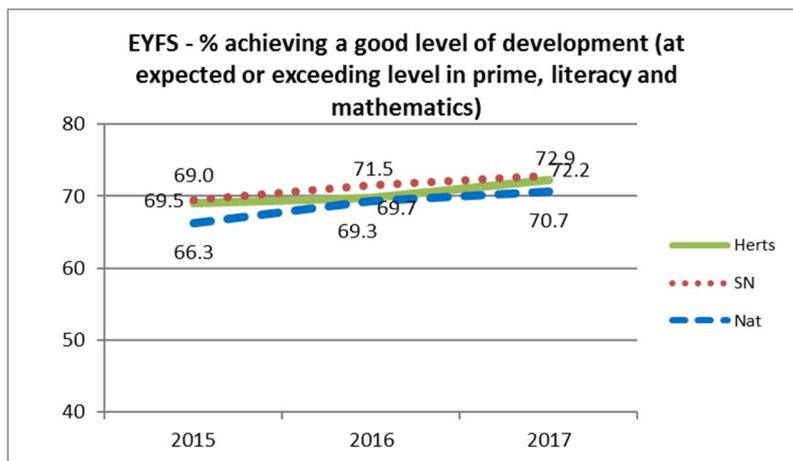
- where the Secretary of State requires an inspection of local authority school improvement functions.
- 4.6 This report includes quintile positions which compare Hertfordshire outcome data to all other local authorities (between 148 to 151 in total, depending on key stage, as some local authorities do not have nursery schools or education support centres). Schools are now measured in this way on Ofsted's school data dashboard giving schools, governors and the public a clear indication of benchmarked performance.
- 4.7 Hertfordshire's performance for many indicators places the authority in the 1st and 2nd quintiles (the top 20% or 40% of all local authorities). The 3rd quintile shows performance at approximately the same as the national average. Those areas where performance is currently in the 4th or 5th quintile are being addressed in Hertfordshire as improvement priorities by Herts for Learning Ltd. For Children Looked After, this is in conjunction with the Hertfordshire Virtual School for Children Looked After.
- 4.8 The most recent reforms to the national curriculum have been phased in from September 2014. As part of these reforms the way in which pupils are assessed was altered in 2015/16.
- 4.9 The old system of national curriculum levels has been replaced at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Key stage 2 test results are now reported on in terms of 'scaled scores'. Key stage 2 writing and all elements at Key Stage 1 are reported on using a new teacher assessment system, using the terminology of 'Expected Standard' and 'Greater Depth'. The standard expected of pupils is higher than in previous years.
- 4.10 At Key Stage 4, Attainment 8 and Progress 8 are now key measures of accountability, alongside the percentage of pupils achieving grade 4 (a standard pass) and grade 5 (a strong pass) in both English and Mathematics, and the proportion of pupils gaining the English Baccalaureate. GCSEs are now linear (all assessments are normally taken at the end of the course) with a grading scale from 1 to 9.
- 4.11 Due to the reforms it is not possible to compare test and examination results from 2016 onwards with previous years.
- 4.12 A House of Commons Briefing Paper (attached at Appendix A) outlines the changes to the grading system for GCSEs.

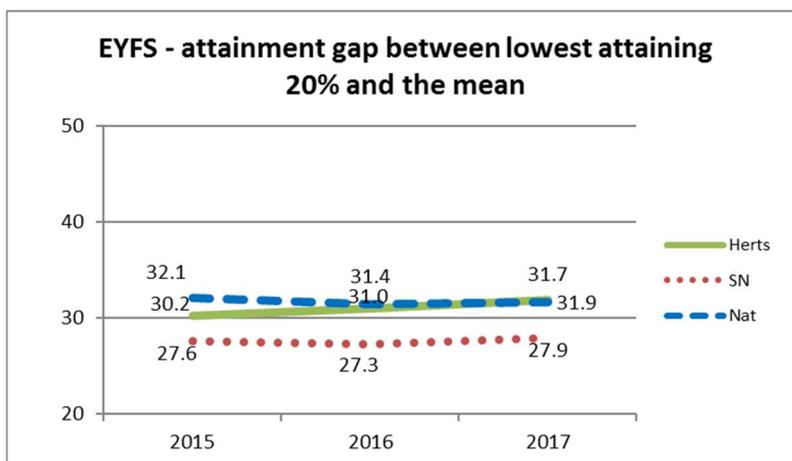
5. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

- 5.1 The EYFS Profile was introduced in 2013 along with a new indicator measuring a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD). The profile is carried out in the final term of the year in which a child reaches age five. The profile and revised EYFS simplified the learning and development requirements by reducing the number of early learning goals from 69 to 17 and placing a stronger emphasis on the three prime areas which are most essential for

children’s healthy development: communication and language; physical; and personal, social and emotional development. From 2013, children are defined as having reached a Good Level of Development at the end of the EYFS if they achieve at least the expected level in the early learning goals relating to personal, social and emotional development; physical development; communication and language and mathematics and literacy.

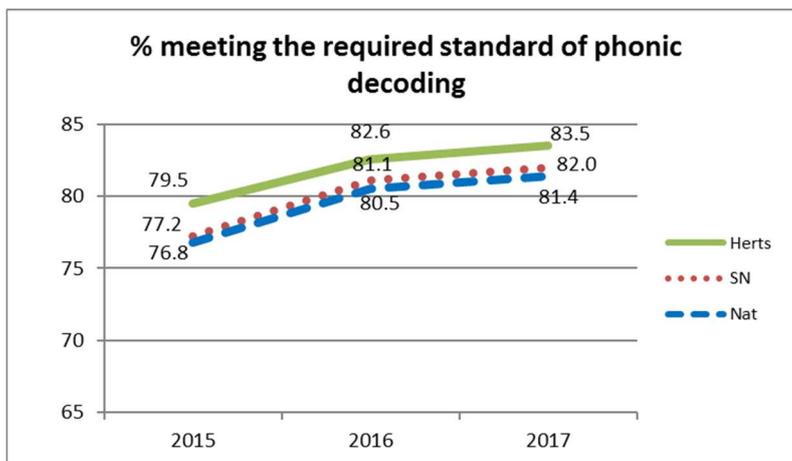
- 5.2 In 2017, 72.2% of children achieved a Good Level of Development, an improvement of 2.5 percentage points (ppts) from 2016 and placing Hertfordshire in the second quintile when ranked against all other local authorities. Hertfordshire is ranked fourth out of the Eastern region local authorities, behind Thurrock, Southend and Essex. The attainment gap between the lowest attaining 20% of young children and the mean was 31.9%, a slight increase of 0.9ppts from 2016 and 0.2ppts higher than the national gap.
- 5.3 Scrutiny of local assessment data is informing the redeployment of resources to target areas in the county where fewer children reach a Good Level of Development. Intense programmes of support and challenge will be delivered in target areas to private, voluntary and independent (PVI) providers offering free early education places for disadvantaged two year olds and free early education entitlement to three and four years olds. This work will upskill the early years workforce to accelerate children’s progress and equip all children (including those most disadvantaged) with the skills they need to start school, with a sharp focus on the importance of transition procedures between schools and PVI providers.
- 5.4 As part of the HfL Hertfordshire Improvement Partner (HIP) programme, Early Years has been identified as a Local Agenda item to focus head teachers on the importance of early scrutiny of children’s progress from their starting points so that pertinent interventions can be put in place to accelerate children’s progress at the earliest opportunity. Schools with the lowest proportion of children reaching a Good Level of Development are being closely monitored. Following successful outcomes in the schools that participated in the Assessment project last year this is being rerun with invitations being sent to schools with low attainment levels to strongly encourage engagement.



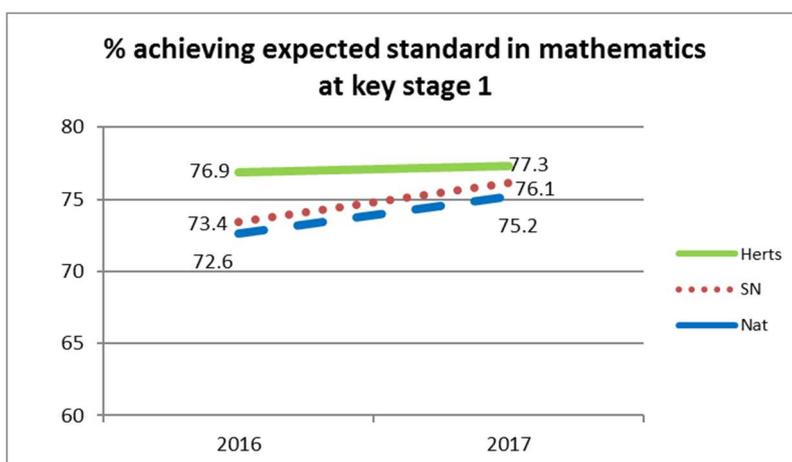
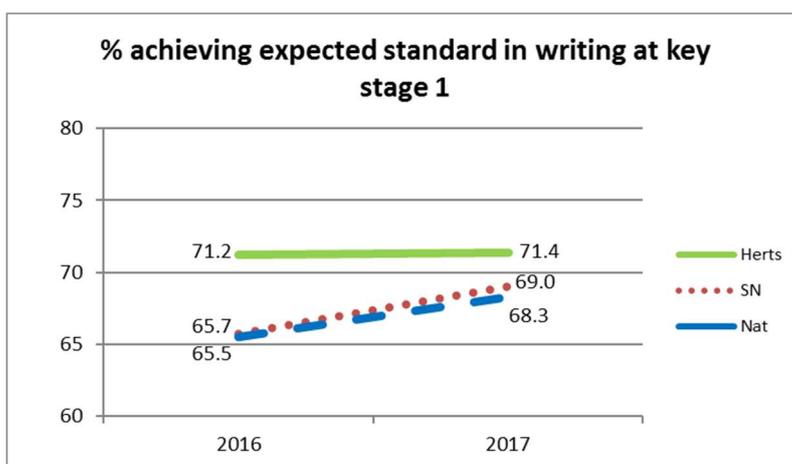
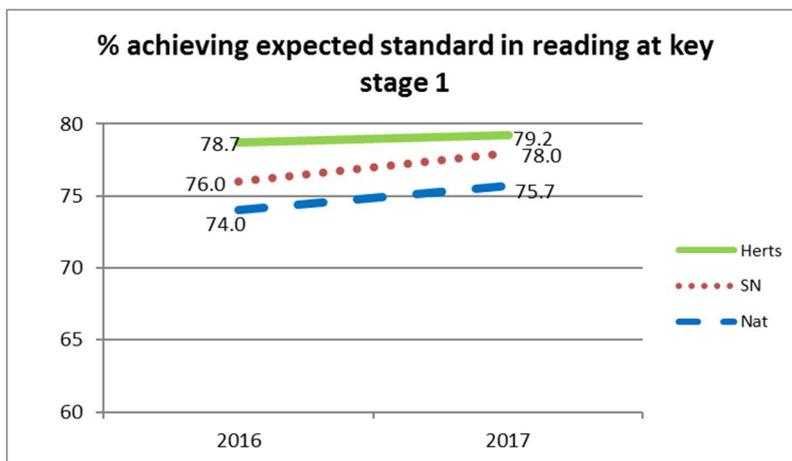


6. Phonics screening check and Key Stage 1

6.1 The phonics screening check was introduced in 2012. It is a statutory assessment for all children in Year 1 (typically aged 6) to check whether they have reached the expected standard in phonic decoding. 83.5% of Hertfordshire Year 1 pupils met the expected standard in 2017, compared with 82.6% in 2016 and 79.5% in 2015. Nationally 81.4% of Year 1 pupils met the expected standard in 2017, compared with 80.5% in 2016 and 76.8% in 2015. Hertfordshire is in the second quintile for the phonics screening check. Hertfordshire is ranked second out of the Eastern region local authorities, one place behind Thurrock.

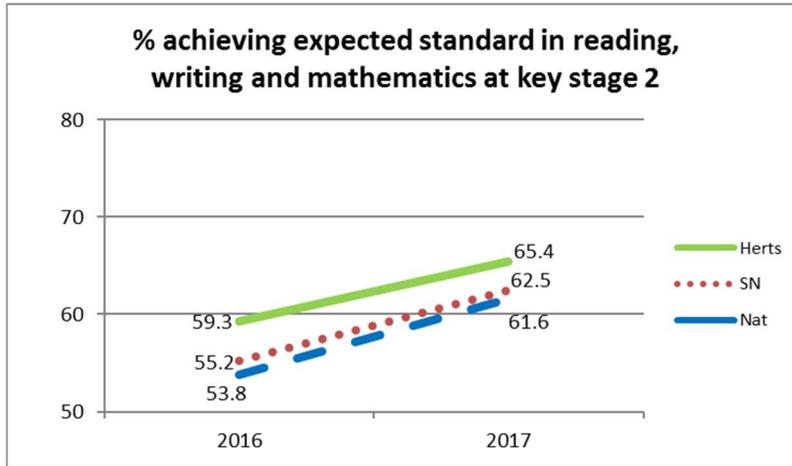


6.2 At Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard in Hertfordshire was above national and statistical neighbours for all three indicators: reading, writing and mathematics. Hertfordshire's performance was above national standard by 3.5ppts for reading, 3.1ppts for writing and 3.1ppts for mathematics. Hertfordshire's performance was above statistical neighbours by 1.2ppts for reading, 2.4ppts for writing and 1.2ppts for mathematics. Hertfordshire remains in the top quintile for reading and is in the second quintile for writing and mathematics. Hertfordshire is ranked first amongst Eastern region local authorities for reading and writing and mathematics attainment.



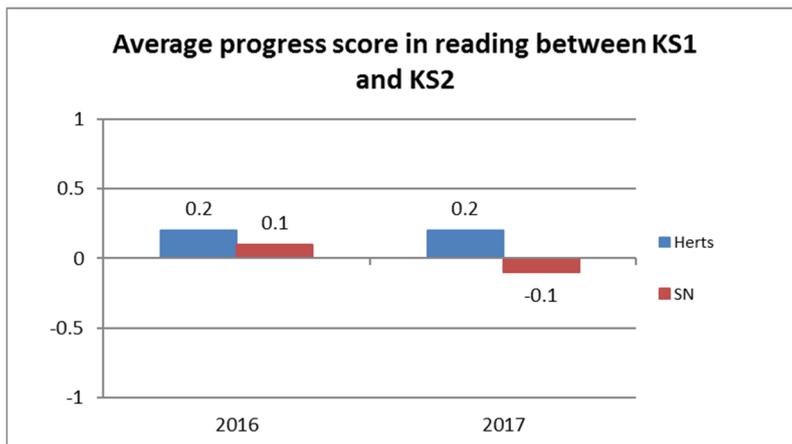
7. Key Stage 2

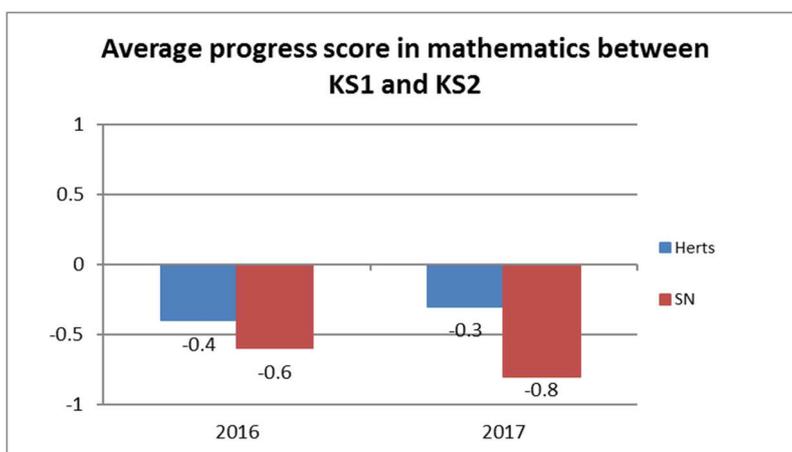
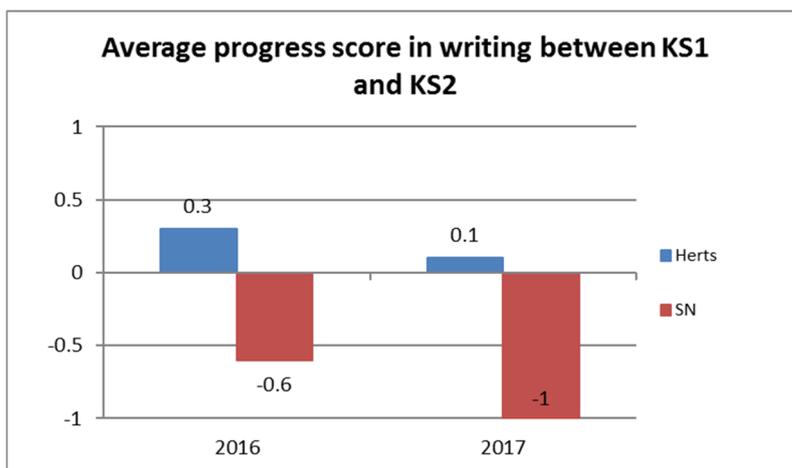
7.1 At Key Stage 2, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard in combined reading, writing and mathematics in Hertfordshire was 3.8ppts above national standard, placing Hertfordshire in the second quintile. Hertfordshire is ranked second amongst Eastern region local authorities for this measure, behind Southend.



7.2 Average progress scores are now used to indicate whether a cohort has made more or less progress between Key Stages 1 and 2 than other pupils nationally with similar starting points. A positive score indicates higher progress than other pupils nationally and a negative score indicates lower progress than other pupils nationally.

7.3 In 2017, average progress in reading and writing in Hertfordshire was higher than national standard, whilst average progress in mathematics was lower than national standard. This data places Hertfordshire in the 3rd quintile for reading and writing progress and the 4th quintile for mathematics progress. Hertfordshire is ranked second amongst Eastern region local authorities for reading progress (behind Southend), third for writing progress (behind Thurrock and Southend) and fourth for mathematics progress (behind Thurrock, Southend and Essex).





7.4 In 2017, floor standards for primary schools required at least 65% of pupils to reach ‘at least the expected standard’ in all subjects (i.e. reading, writing and mathematics) and to meet minimum progress measures (set by the DfE) across Key Stage 2 from the end of Key Stage 1 finishing points in reading, writing and mathematics. Six Hertfordshire primary schools (five maintained, one academy) are below the floor standard in 2017, compared to fourteen in 2016. One school has now been below floor for both years. This school is receiving significant support and challenge and is not expected to be below floor in 2018. The figure represents 2% of Hertfordshire primary schools, lower than the national figure of 4%. All schools below floor will receive at least one additional visit from their HIP specifically looking at their 2018 predictions, with a view to securing improvements in outcomes. Additional teaching and learning support will also be provided as necessary.

7.5 In 2015, the DfE introduced a new definition of ‘Coasting schools’. Coasting schools are those which are deemed by the DfE to be performing below a reasonable level of attainment and progress (as shown in three years of data). In 2016 and 2017, despite the much more rigorous testing system the level of attainment (those children reaching at least the expected standard) threshold at Key Stage 2 remained the same as in previous years at 85%. This was despite the fact that the national average between 2015 and 2016 fell from 80% to 53%. In 2017, 35 primary schools in Hertfordshire achieved a combined total (reading, writing and mathematics) of 85% or more. Ten

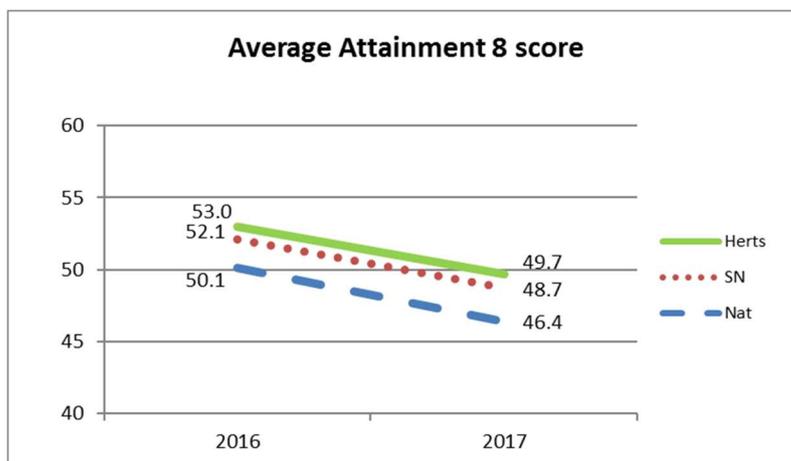
Hertfordshire primary schools are deemed as coasting in 2017, a drop from 12 in 2016. This figure represents 3% of Hertfordshire primary schools, lower than the national figure of 4%.

8. Key Stage 4

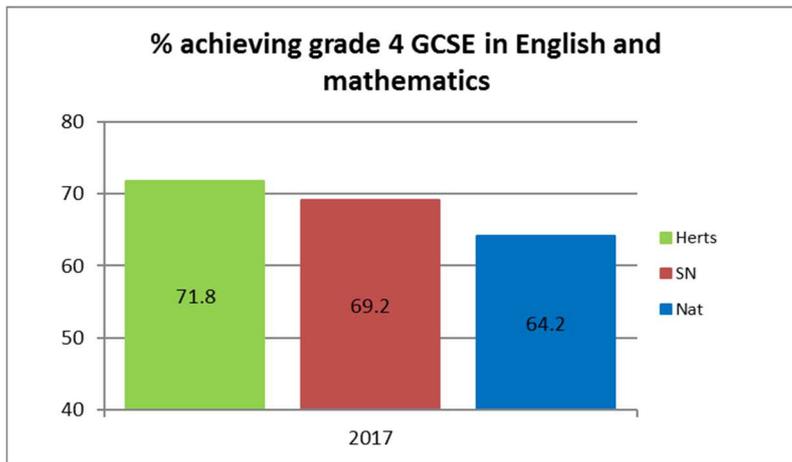
8.1 Hertfordshire is in the top quintile for four of the six key secondary indicators.

8.2 Attainment 8 measures the average achievement of pupils in up to 8 qualifications including English (double weighted if the combined English qualification, or both language and literature are taken), maths (double weighted), three further qualifications that count in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) and three further qualifications that can be GCSE qualifications (including EBacc subjects) or any other non-GCSE qualifications on the DfE approved list.

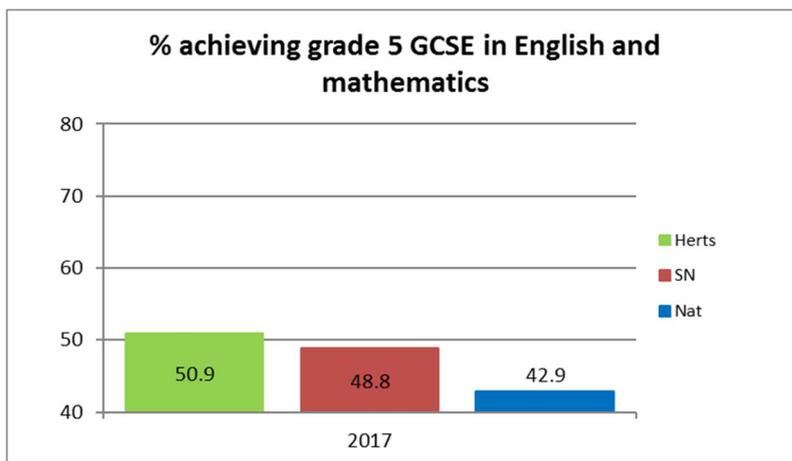
8.3 The average Attainment 8 score in Hertfordshire was 49.7, higher than the comparable figures nationally and for statistical neighbours of 46.4 and 48.7 respectively. Hertfordshire is ranked 20th out of all local authorities, in the 1st quintile. Hertfordshire is ranked second out of the Eastern region local authorities, behind Southend.



8.4 For the standard pass in English and mathematics measure (grade 4), the percentage attaining this benchmark was 71.8%, compared to the national figure of 64.2% and 69.2% for statistical neighbours. Hertfordshire is ranked 17th out of 150 local authorities on this measure, and is in the first quintile. Hertfordshire is ranked first out of the Eastern region local authorities on this measure.

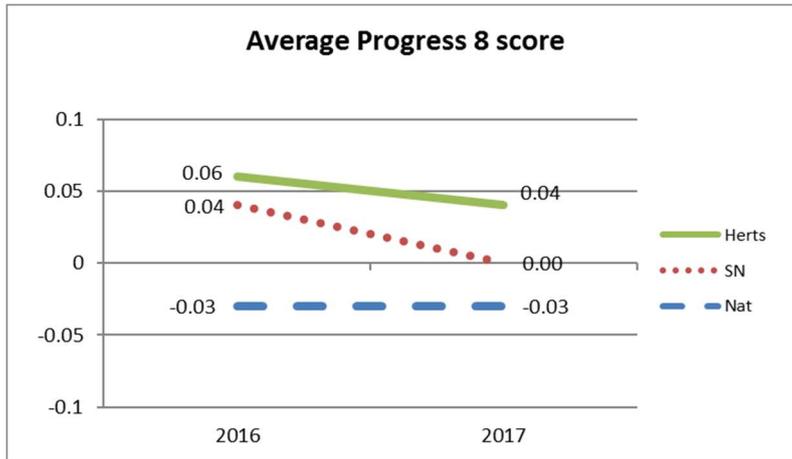


8.5 For the good pass in English and mathematics measure (grade 5), the percentage attaining this benchmark was 50.9%, compared to the national figure of 42.9% and 48.8% for statistical neighbours. Hertfordshire is ranked 18th out of 150 local authorities on this measure, and is in the first quintile. Hertfordshire is ranked second out of the Eastern region local authorities behind Southend.



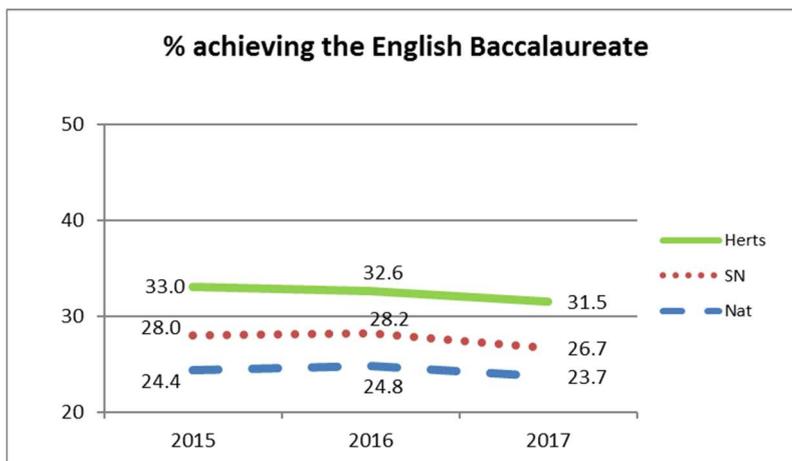
8.6 Progress 8 aims to capture the progress pupils make from the end of key stage 2 to the end of key stage 4. It compares pupils' achievement – their Attainment 8 score – with the average Attainment 8 score of all pupils nationally who had a similar starting point (or 'prior attainment'), calculated using assessment results from the end of primary school. Progress 8 is a **relative measure**; therefore the national average Progress 8 score for mainstream schools is zero. When including pupils at special schools the national average is not zero as Progress 8 scores for special schools are calculated using Attainment 8 estimates based on pupils in mainstream schools.

8.7 The average Progress 8 score in Hertfordshire was 0.04, higher than the comparable figures nationally and for statistical neighbours of -0.03 and 0.00 respectively. Hertfordshire is ranked 49th out of all local authorities and is in the 2nd quintile. Hertfordshire is ranked fourth out of the Eastern region local authorities behind Cambridgeshire, Southend and Luton.

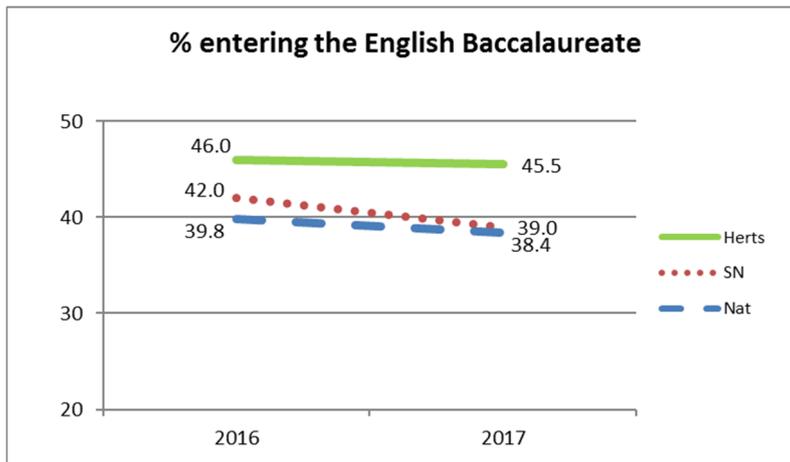


8.8 The English Bacallaureate was introduced as a performance measure in 2010. It is not a qualification in itself; the measure recognises where pupils have secured a grade 5 or better across a core group of academic subjects – English, Mathematics, History or Geography, two Sciences and a Language.

8.9 In Hertfordshire 31.6% of pupils achieved English Bacallaureate in 2017. This performance is 7.7ppts above the national figure and 4.9ppts above the statistical neighbours figure. Hertfordshire is ranked 22nd out of all local authorities, in the 1st quintile. Hertfordshire is ranked first out of the Eastern region local authorities.



8.10 The percentage of pupils entering the English Bacallaureate is also now used as a performance measure. In 2017 45.5% of pupils in Hertfordshire entered the EBacc, 7.1ppts higher than the national figure and 6.5ppts higher than statistical neighbours. Hertfordshire is ranked first out of the Eastern region local authorities.



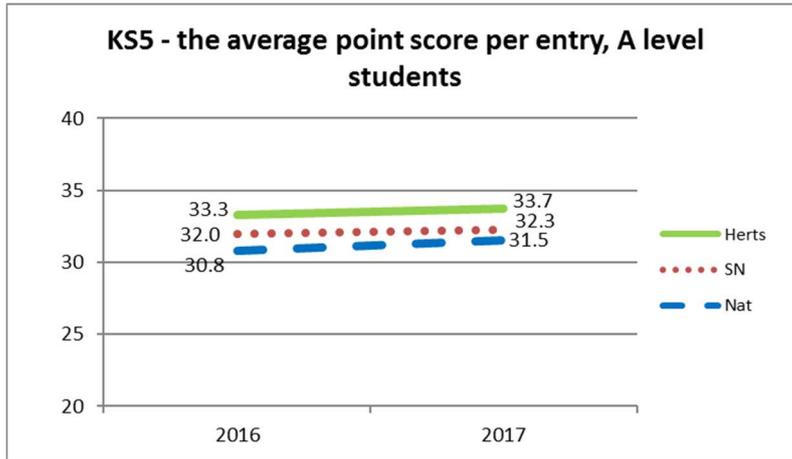
8.11 To be below the floor standard in 2017 secondary schools must have a Progress 8 score below -0.5. Based upon provisional data, six Hertfordshire maintained secondary schools, one academy, two studio schools and two university technical colleges are below floor standard this year. The two studio schools have closed with effect from August 2017. This figure represents 12.7% of Hertfordshire secondary schools, slightly higher than the national figure of 12%.

8.12 In 2015, the DfE introduced a new definition of 'Coasting schools'. Coasting schools are those which are deemed by the DfE to be performing below a reasonable level of attainment and progress (as shown in three years of data). In 2016, the threshold at key stage 4 was a Progress 8 score below -0.25. Based upon the 2016 threshold and provisional data, three Hertfordshire maintained secondary schools, two academies, two studio schools and one university technical college are deemed to be coasting in 2017. The two studio schools have closed with effect from August 2017.

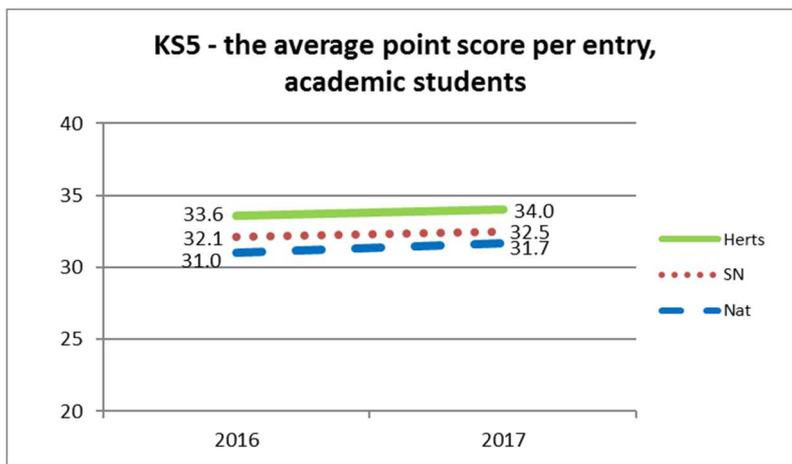
9. Key stage 5

9.1 Due to the reforms it is not possible to compare test and examination results from 2016 onwards with previous years. Average attainment is now reported separately for students studying different types of qualifications - A level, academic, tech level (level 3 qualifications for students wishing to specialise in a technical occupation or occupational group) and applied general (level 3 qualifications that provide broad study of a vocational subject area).

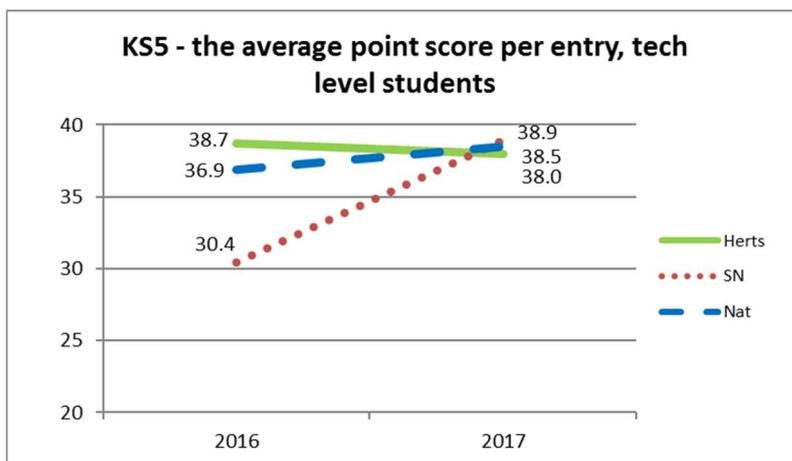
9.2 At Key Stage 5, grades for A level and equivalent qualifications are converted into point scores. In 2017 the average point score per examination entry for A level students in Hertfordshire schools was 33.7 (equivalent to a C+ grade), compared to 31.5 nationally (equivalent to a C grade). The score places Hertfordshire 16th out of all local authorities, in the 1st quintile. Hertfordshire is ranked second out of the Eastern region local authorities behind Southend.



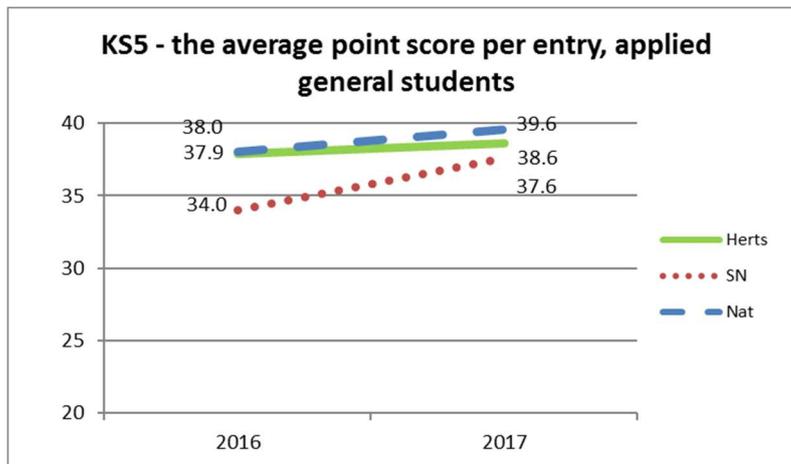
9.3 The average point score per examination entry for academic students was 34.0 compared to 31.7 nationally.



9.4 Smaller numbers of students in Hertfordshire complete tech level and applied general programmes, so outcomes are subject to greater variation from one year to the next. The average point score per examination entry for tech level students was 38.0 compared to 38.5 nationally.



- 9.5 The average point score per examination entry for applied general students was 38.6 compared to 39.6 nationally.



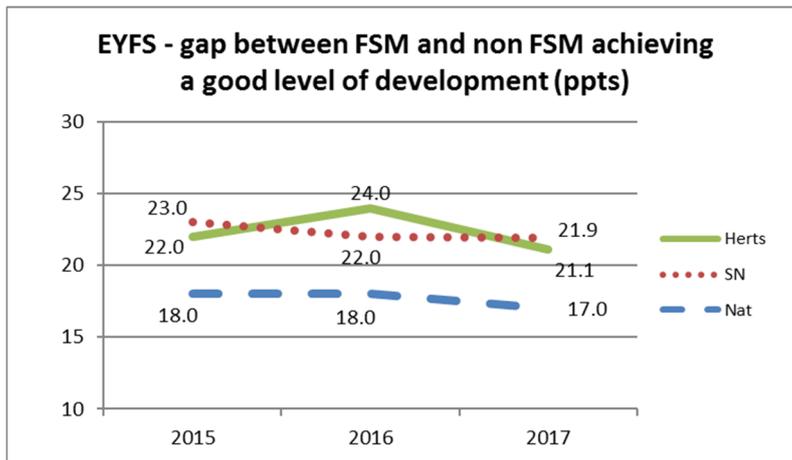
10. Performance of pupils in receipt of free school meals (FSM)

- 10.1 There are currently two measures used by the DfE to measure performance of children from lower socio-economic groups
- FSM pupils - pupils eligible for and receiving free school meals in the year of the test/assessment
 - FSM Ever 6 pupils - pupils eligible for and receiving a free school meal at any time over the previous six years

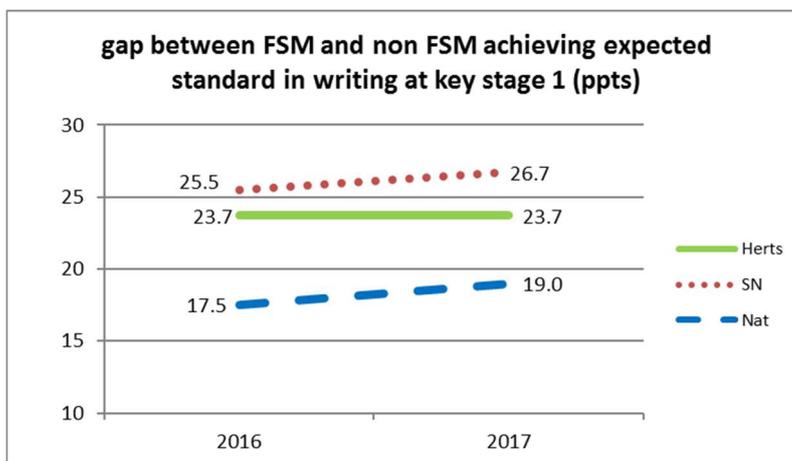
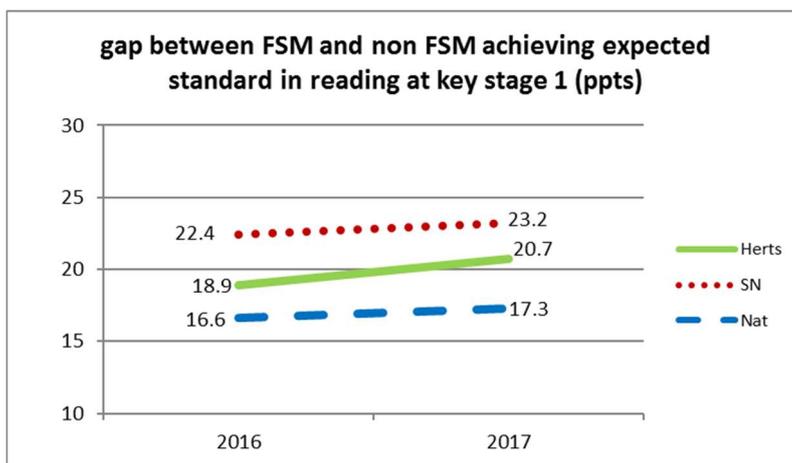
The term 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to pupils who are:

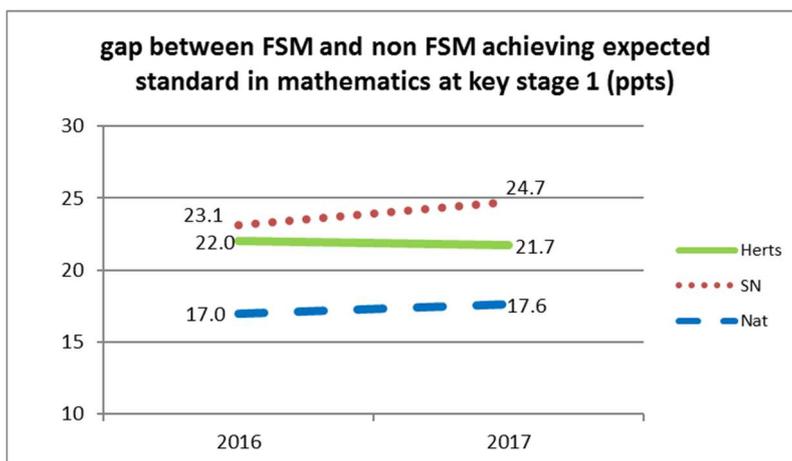
- Eligible for free schools meals (FSM) in the last six years; or
- Looked after continuously for 1 day or more; or
- Adopted from care on or after 30 December 2005, or left in care under a special guardianship order or a residence order

- 10.2 Disadvantaged pupils are supported by Government funding called the Pupil Premium Grant. Children who are looked after in the care of the Local Authority receive an additional amount of funding called Pupil Premium Plus. Children in the early years in receipt of additional funding receive a smaller amount called the Early Years Pupil Premium.
- 10.3 Since January 2015, children from service families are not included in the definition of disadvantaged pupils in the DfE performance tables. They do however receive an element of the Pupil Premium Grant.
- 10.4 At the Early Years foundation stage in 2017 the gap between FSM and non FSM children diminished from 24ppts in 2106 to 21.1ppts in 2017. This gap is 4.1ppts wider than national, placing Hertfordshire in the 5th quintile, with 53% of FSM children in Hertfordshire achieving a Good Level of Development in 2017 compared to 56% nationally.

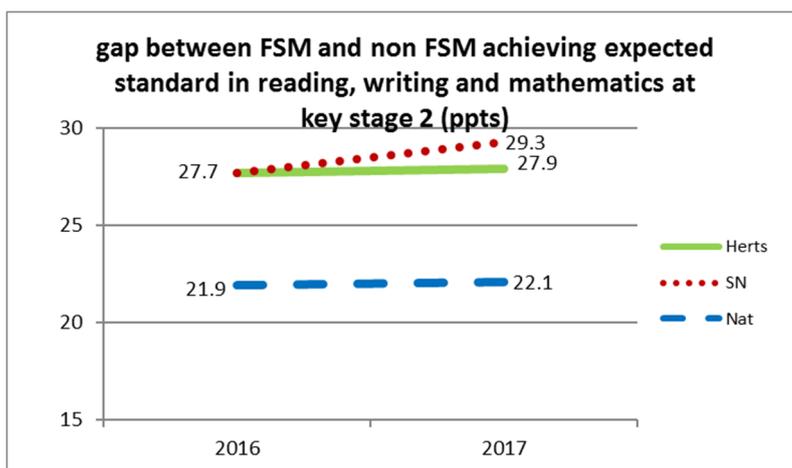


10.5 At Key Stage 1, in 2017 the gap between FSM and non FSM children in Hertfordshire was larger than national in reading, writing and mathematics, but lower than our statistical neighbours for all three indicators. The Hertfordshire gaps were 3.4ppts, 4.7ppts and 4.1ppts greater than the national gaps in reading, writing and mathematics respectively. Hertfordshire is placed in the 4th quintile for reading and mathematics and the 5th quintile for writing.

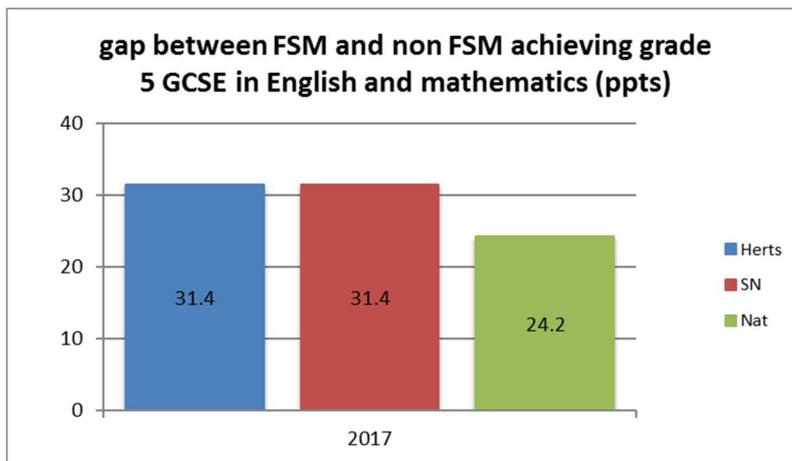
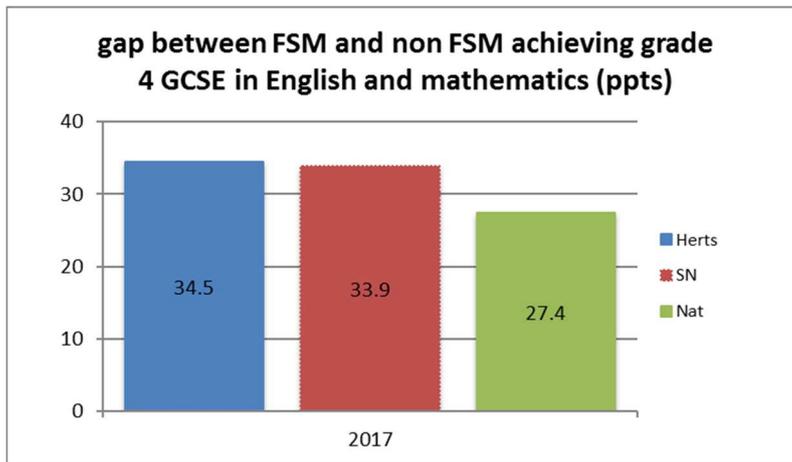




10.6 The FSM gap for pupils in Hertfordshire at Key Stage 2 was 27.9ppts and Hertfordshire is placed in the 5th quintile. This gap is larger than national but lower than our statistical neighbours. However 40% of Hertfordshire FSM pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics compared to 43% of FSM pupils nationally. The focus on improving performance for this group of pupils will continue to be a priority in 2017/18.



10.7 In 2017, at Key Stage 4, the gap between the attainment of FSM pupils attaining a standard pass at GCSE in English and mathematics (grade 4) and non FSM pupils was 34.5ppts in Hertfordshire. The comparable figures nationally and for statistical neighbours were 27.4ppts and 33.9ppts respectively. Hertfordshire in the 5th quintile compared to other local authorities. For the strong pass in English and mathematics measure (grade 5), the gap between the attainment of FSM pupils and non FSM pupils was 31.4ppts in Hertfordshire, compared to 24.2ppts nationally and 31.4ppts for statistical neighbours. Hertfordshire in the 5th quintile compared to other local authorities.

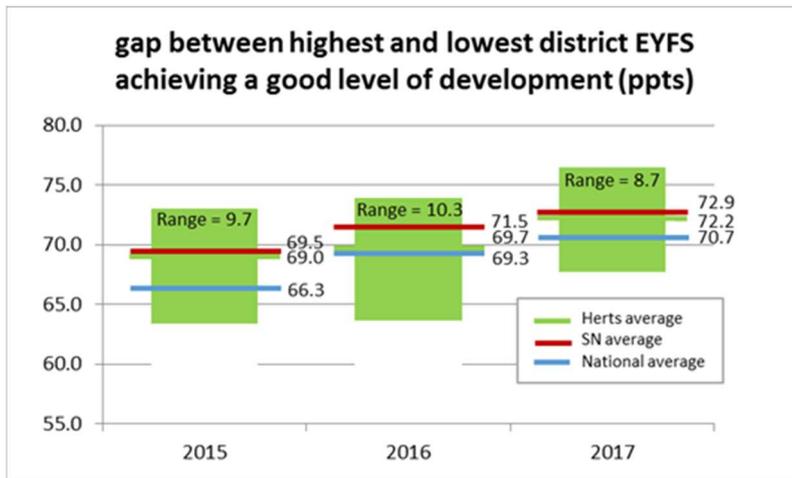


11. Performance of Children Looked After

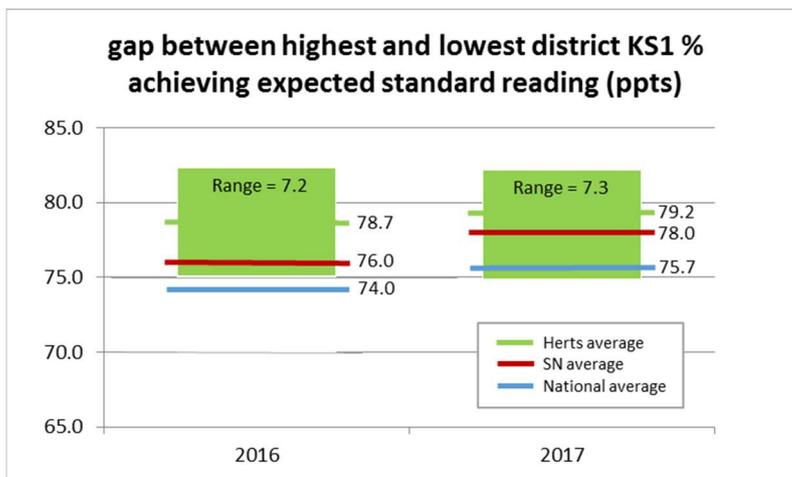
- 11.1 The Department for Education has introduced a new requirement this year that NCER (National Consortium for Examination Results) and its member authorities shall not reproduce data related to Children Looked After within any publication before the Statistical First Release due at the end of March 2018.

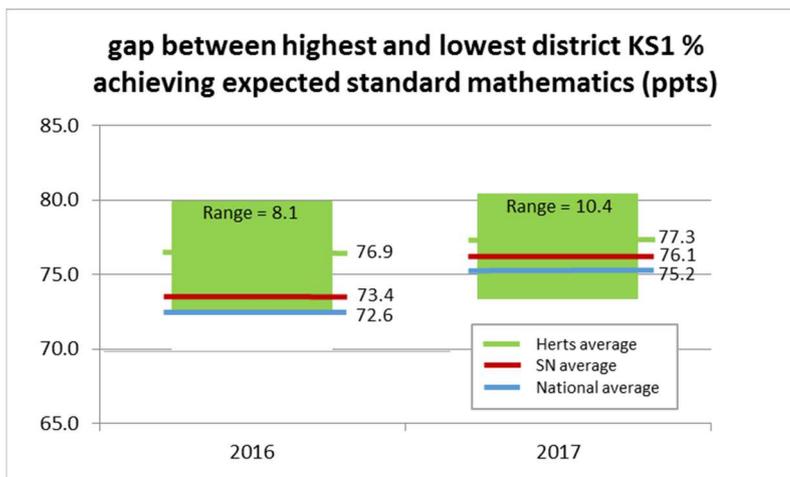
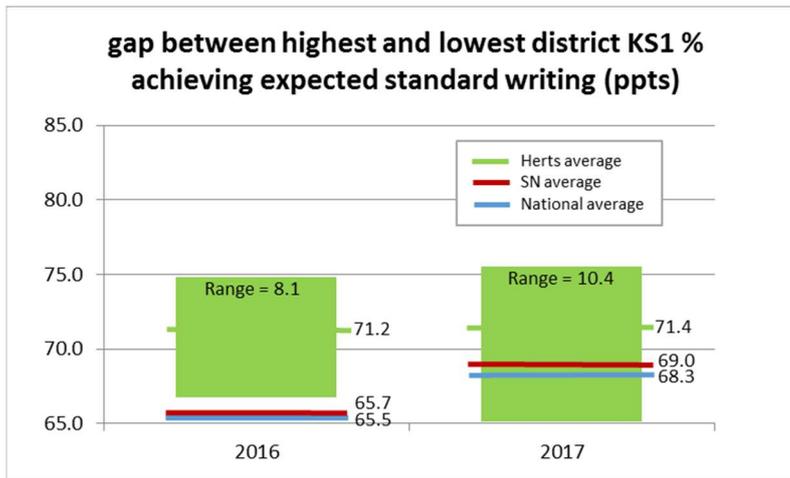
12. District variation

- 12.1 In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the gap between the highest and lowest performing districts for the percentage of children reaching a Good Level of Development has decreased by 1.6ppts from 10.3ppts in 2016 to 8.7ppts in 2017. Watford was the lowest performing district at this key stage and St Albans was the highest. The most improved districts in 2016 were Watford and Welwyn Hatfield.

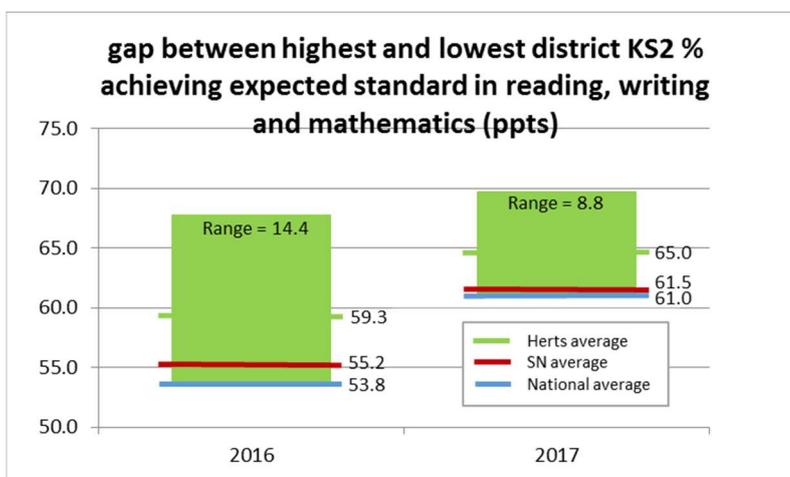


12.2 At Key Stage 1 the gap between the highest and lowest performing districts for the percentage of children achieving the expected standard has increased by 0.1ppts in reading, has increased by 2.3ppts in writing and has decreased by 0.4ppts in mathematics. In reading, in writing and in mathematics all districts except Welwyn Hatfield achieved an expected standard above the national average. Welwyn Hatfield was below the national average by 0.8ppts for reading, by 3.2ppts for writing and by 1.9ppts for mathematics. St Albans was the highest performing district for reading and mathematics and Three Rivers was the highest performing district for writing.

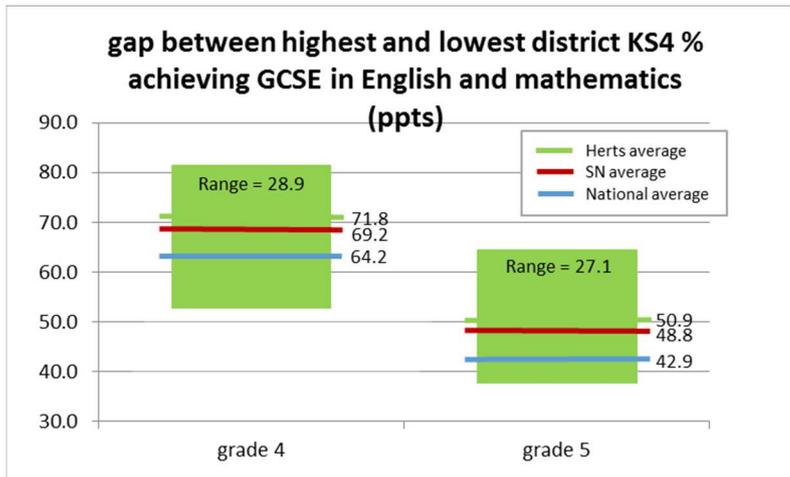




12.3 At Key Stage 2 the gap between the highest and lowest performing districts for the percentage of children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics has decreased by 5.6ppts. Nine districts achieved an expected standard above the national average and one district (Broxbourne) was 0.1ppts below the national average. St Albans was the highest performing district.

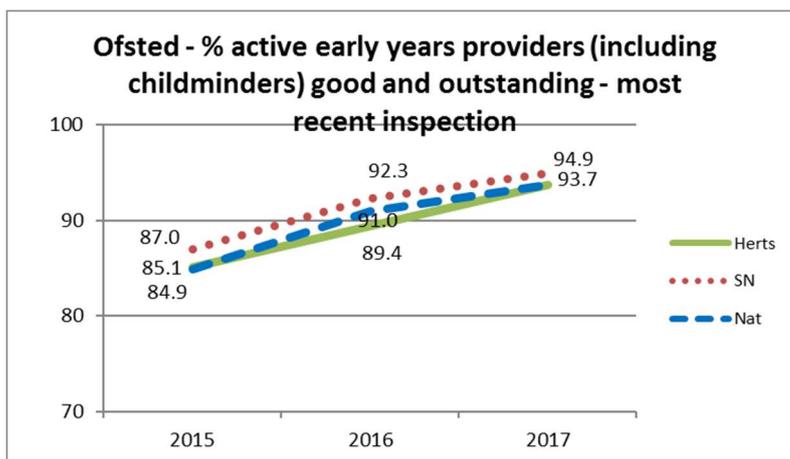


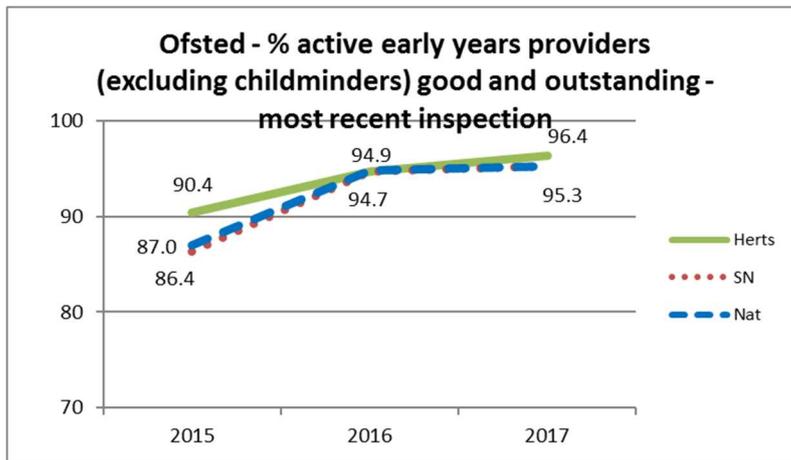
12.4 At Key Stage 4, provisional data shows that the gap between the highest and lowest performing districts for the percentage of pupils attaining a standard pass at GCSE in English and mathematics (grade 4) was 28.9ppts. For the strong pass in English and mathematics measure (grade 5), the gap between the highest and lowest performing districts was 27.1ppts. In both cases, Stevenage was the lowest performing district and Three Rivers was the highest performing district.



13. School quality – based on Hertfordshire schools’ most recent Ofsted inspections

13.1 At the end of the academic year, 93.7% of all Early Years providers were judged good or outstanding. This was equal to the national figure and 4.3ppts higher than the comparable figure for 2016. If childminders are excluded from the analysis 96.4% of providers were judged good or outstanding, 1.1ppts higher than both the national figure and that for statistical neighbours.

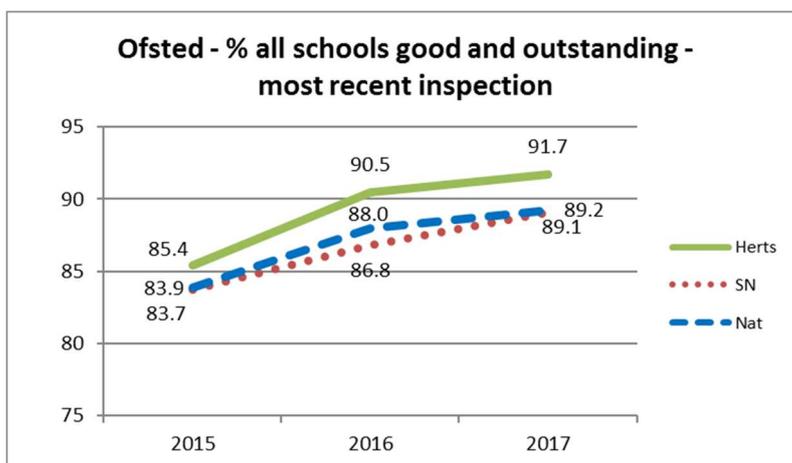




13.2 Of Hertfordshire's 82 Children's Centres, 61 had been inspected and reports published by the end of August 2015, when the inspection programme was paused. The percentage of centres judged good or outstanding was 75.4%, 9.5ppts above the national average of 65.9% and 14.4ppts above the average of our statistical neighbours (61%).

13.3 At the end of the academic year 2016/17, the percentage of all schools judged good or outstanding, the recognised benchmark, was 91.7%, higher than the national figure of 89.2%. At the end of August 2017 Hertfordshire was ranked 48th in comparison to other LAs and is in the 2nd quintile. The percentage of all Hertfordshire schools judged outstanding by Ofsted at their most recent inspection remained higher than the national proportion at 23.8% (national 21.2%).

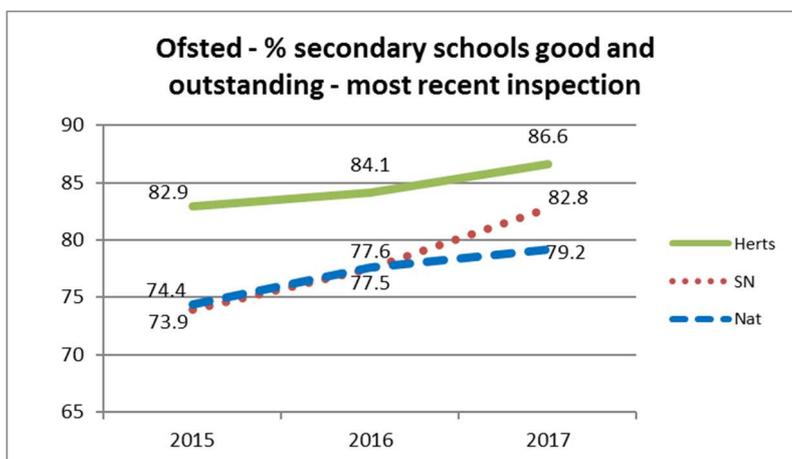
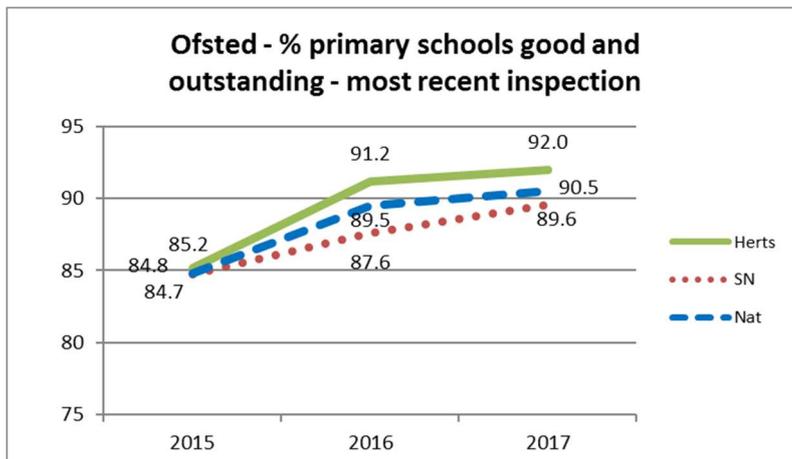
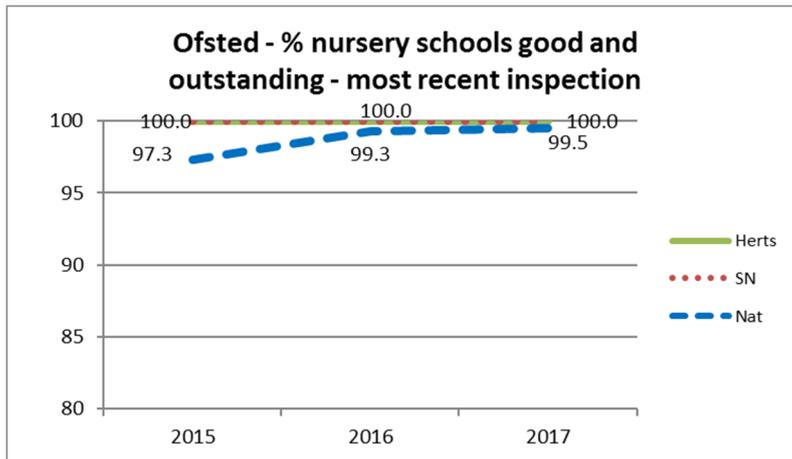
13.4 The percentage of schools judged requiring improvement was lower than the national figure at all phases (6.8%, national 8.9%). In Hertfordshire 1.51% of all schools were in an Ofsted inadequate category which is below the national figure of 1.94%.



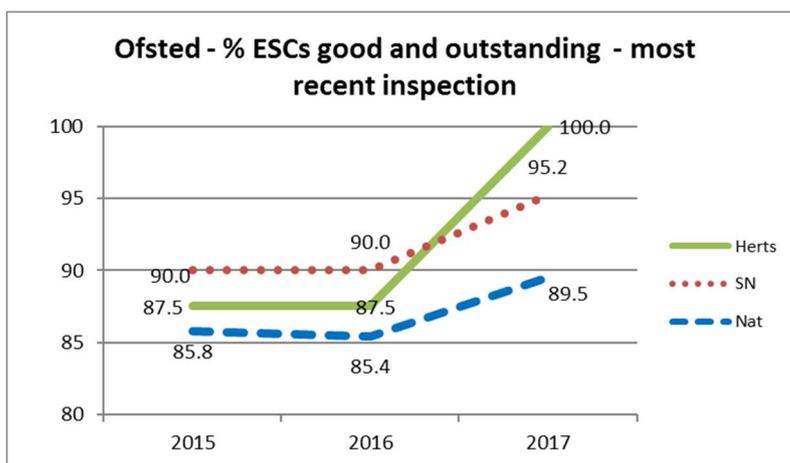
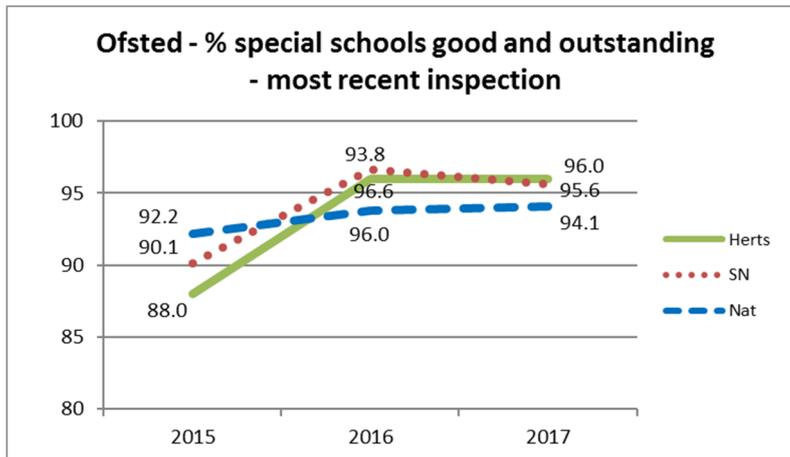
13.5 The picture varies by phase with a higher percentage of nursery schools achieving a good or outstanding grading which reflects the national picture. At the end of the academic year 2016/17, Hertfordshire was slightly above the

national figure for nursery schools with every Hertfordshire nursery school judged good or better.

- 13.6 For primary schools Hertfordshire was above both the national (90.5%) and statistical neighbour (89.6%) averages at 92.0%, an increase of 0.8ppts over the year. For secondary schools Hertfordshire was significantly above both national (79.2%) and statistical neighbour (82.8%) figures at 86.6%, an increase of 2.5ppts over the year.



- 13.7 The percentage of Hertfordshire special schools judged good or outstanding was 96%, 1.9ppts higher than the national figure. The percentage of Education Support Centres which were graded good or outstanding was 100%, 10.5ppts higher than the national percentage. However the small numbers in each of these school groups means that the outcome of just one inspection makes a significant difference to the overall percentage.



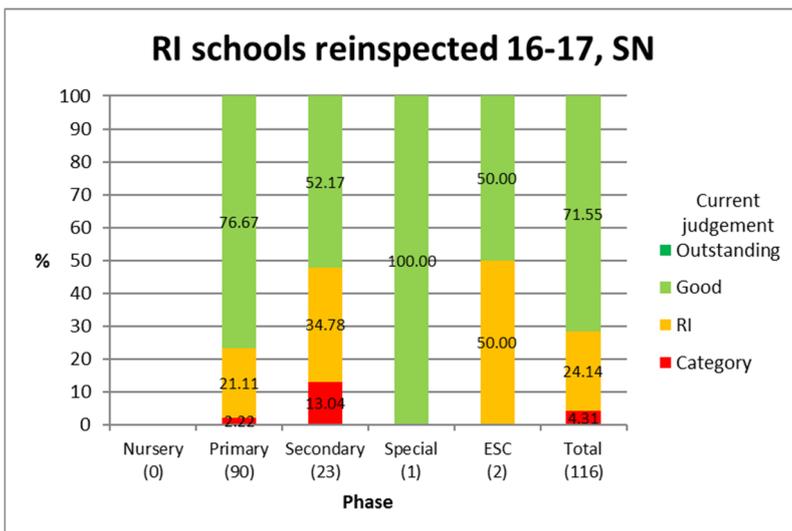
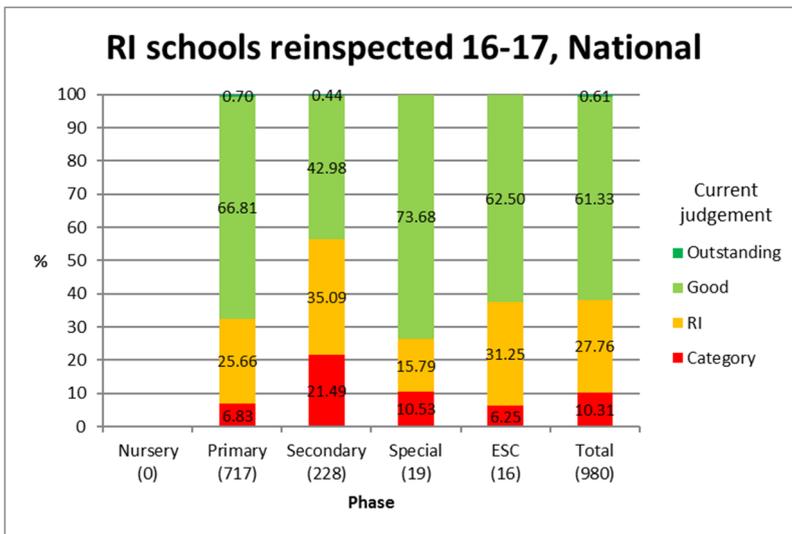
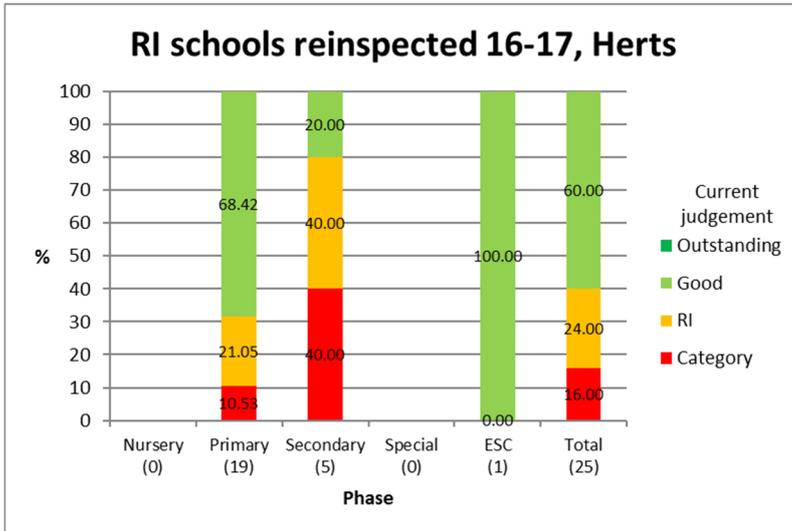
- 13.8 There is a variation in quality amongst districts in Ofsted outcomes as there is in attainment. The gap between the highest and lowest performing district for the percentage of all schools judged good and outstanding at their latest inspection at 31 August 2017 was 7ppts; an improvement of 12.5ppts from 2016 when the gap was 19.5ppts. The lowest performing district at the end of August 2017 was East Herts (where 88.6% of all schools were good and outstanding, a decline from the August 2016 figure of 93.7%). The highest performing district was St Albans, which improved from 90% of schools good and outstanding in 2016 to 95.7% in 2016.

14. School quality – Ofsted inspections during the academic year 2016/17

- 14.1 From September 2015, a new Ofsted framework was introduced known as the “Common Inspection Framework”. The expectations of schools are higher and inspectors are required to focus more intensively on the quality of teaching and learning. There has also been the introduction of short inspections of good

schools which are for one day only. Ofsted no longer routinely inspects outstanding schools and identifies schools for inspection through regular risk assessments based on performance. As a result the sample inspected each year is not representative of all schools.

- 14.2 During the academic year 2016/17, 131 Hertfordshire schools were selected by Ofsted to receive section 5 inspections or short section 8 inspections. The proportion of schools judged outstanding was 13% (17 schools), good 64.9% (85 schools), requiring improvement 15.3% (20 schools) and 6.9% (9 schools) judged inadequate. A marginally lower proportion of all schools inspected were judged as good or outstanding than in the previous year, 77.9% down from 82.9% in 2015/16 (102 schools), whereas the national figure for this measure decreased from 65% to 53%.
- 14.3 The proportion of secondary schools judged good or outstanding in Hertfordshire (67%) decreased by 5ppts in 2016/17 from 72% in 2015/2016; the proportion of good or outstanding primary/nursery schools decreased by 6ppts from 85% to 79% over the same period.
- 14.4 Five of the six special schools and all three of the Education Support Centres (ESC) inspected in 2016/17 were judged to be outstanding or good.
- 14.5 Seven maintained primary schools and one maintained secondary school were judged inadequate in 2016/17, which means they will be expected to become a sponsored academy and will no longer be maintained by the County Council. One secondary academy was judged inadequate in 2016/17, the Regional Schools' Commissioner (RSC) will endeavour to broker a new sponsor for this school.
- 14.6 Of the schools which were inspected, 81% improved or remained at the same grade (primary/nursery 81%, secondary 79%, special 83%, ESC 100%). This is a decrease from the previous year when 94% of schools improved or remained at the same grade.
- 14.7 Twenty-five Hertfordshire schools previously judged requiring improvement (RI) were re-inspected in 2016/17. 60% of these schools improved to good or outstanding. This is comparable to the national figure of 62% and 1ppt lower than statistical neighbours.



15. Progress in priorities identified for 2016/17

- 15.1 Progress was achieved in two out of the three areas identified for improvement in 2016/17:
- (i) Increase the number of good or better schools or settings as judged by Ofsted,
 - (ii) Close the gap for vulnerable groups whilst maintaining at least expected progress for all,
 - (iii) Achieve greater geographical consistency in outcomes across the county.
- 15.2 A higher number of schools and settings are judged by Ofsted to be good or outstanding.
- 15.3 Work will continue with those schools currently judged as requiring improvement to support them to become good. Inadequate schools will be supported during their transition to become sponsored academies. Support will be offered to good and outstanding schools to retain/improve their judgement at their next inspection.
- 15.4 The biggest challenge for Hertfordshire is to improve the educational performance of disadvantaged children. The gap between children receiving free school meals and other Hertfordshire children is not reducing at a fast enough rate. The gaps remain larger than national at all key stages. The focus on improving performance for disadvantaged pupils will continue to be strengthened in 2017/18.
- 15.5 Good progress has been made on achieving geographical consistency over the last few years and there is a strong correlation between work that has taken place through targeted projects and improvement on this indicator.
- 15.6 For Early Years, Key Stage 1 mathematics and Key Stage 2 gaps have reduced between 2016 and 2017. For Key Stage 1 reading and Key Stage 4 attainment gaps between districts have remained broadly similar. For Key Stage 1 writing gaps have increased between 2016 and 2017.
- 15.7 For school quality, the gap between the highest and lowest performing district for the percentage of all schools judged good and outstanding at their latest inspection has reduced considerably over time. This is affected each year by the number of inspections taking place in each district.

16. Priorities for 2017/18

16.1 Following the review of 2016/17 performance, the priorities identified for 2017/18 are as stated in priorities (i) and (ii) of Hertfordshire's Strategy for School Improvement 2014-17, with priority (iii) (eliminating discrepancies at district level) incorporated into all methodologies:

- (i) a) Increase the number of good or better schools and settings, as judged by Ofsted, through section 5 inspections
 - b) Increase the number of schools who receive a section 8 inspection letter indicating that they are well on the way to outstanding
- (ii) Increase the pace of closing the gap for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups

16.2 Officers are working closely with the Herts for Learning Ltd executive team on their 2017/18 improvement plan. Strategies include:

- Continuing the focus on safeguarding in all schools that engage with HfL.
- Developing 'sustaining good' and 'good to outstanding' training to target schools due for inspection.
- Developing an intervention package to support schools who receive a section 8 inspection followed by a letter detailing areas for improvement.
- Increasing level of challenge to academies and to schools of concern that do not engage with HfL, where necessary.
- Scrutinising information about the lowest attaining 20% of children in Early Years and using this information to inform training content and delivery models across schools and PVI settings.
- Providing leadership coaching and training for middle and senior leaders in schools to address key areas of underperformance.
- Supporting schools in recruiting and upskilling teachers in key subjects.
- Responding to the findings from the Hertfordshire County Council peer review programme in March 2018 (focussed on diminishing the difference between disadvantaged groups and their peers).
- Cross discipline working between TLAs (teaching and learning advisers), HIPs (Hertfordshire Improvement Partners), Disadvantaged and Vulnerable groups team and Early Years team to improve outcomes from 'Diminishing the Differences' work and HIP visits even further.
- Collaborating with Teaching School Alliances and other partners in bidding for DfE funding through the Strategic School Improvement Fund (SSIF) and providing support to identified schools to specifically improve achievement in Key Stage 4 for disadvantaged students
- Disseminating available evidence from research about strategies that are effective in improving outcomes and attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- Researching and sharing best practice in schools that have closed gaps.
- Implementing the successful health behaviour training programme.

17. Financial implications

17.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

18. Equality Implications

18.1 When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are fully aware of, and have themselves rigorously considered the equalities implications of the decision that they are taking.

18.2 Rigorous consideration will ensure that proper appreciation of any potential impact of that decision on the County Council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) produced by officers.

18.3 The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

18.4 An EqIA has not been undertaken in relation to this report. The Panel are not requested to make a decision in respect of the reports contents.

Background Information

- *Appendix A - House of Commons Library Briefing Paper Number 06962: GCSE, AS and A level reform (England)*
- *Hertfordshire Strategy for School Improvement 2014-17*
http://www.thegrid.org.uk/leadership/improvement/documents/herts_strategy_school_improvement.pdf