

Directors of Children's Services  
Directors of Education

4 August 2005

Dear Colleague,

**Guidance for LAs on target-setting at Key Stages 2, 3, 4 and for minority ethnic groups, looked after children and school attendance**

Further to my letter of 1 June, I am now enclosing guidance on setting LA and school targets for 2007. As well as Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 and school attendance targets, the guidance now covers advice on setting targets for looked after children and minority ethnic groups. I am very grateful to representatives from ConfEd, NAHT, SHA and LGA for their help in putting this guidance together.

The White Paper "14-19 Education and Skills" sets out our commitment to see more young people achieve the basics in English and mathematics. To reflect this, we will pilot a new performance indicator, showing the proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more A\*-C GCSEs or equivalent including English and mathematics, in the School and College Achievement and Attainment Tables this year. Full details on the pilot process can be found at Annex C of the guidance. We do not want to pre-empt decisions on the exact indicator to be reported in the Tables from 2006 and therefore have not changed the statutory requirements on schools and LAs this year. It is important, however, that schools and LAs begin to plan now for English and mathematics being integral to their target arrangements and we therefore encourage you to ask schools to set and report an additional 5 or more A\*-C or equivalent target which includes English and mathematics (either GCSE or other level 2 Key Skills and Basic skills regarded as functional equivalents).

**Priorities Meetings**

You will have seen the joint DfES/CSCI letter of 7 July about the arrangements for Priorities Meetings in the autumn, which will replace the annual education stocktake. The Priorities Meeting will allow all key local partners to consider with those who hold a national remit, the local and national priorities for improving outcomes for children and young people in 2005/06. Education outcomes including a review of issues emerging from the analysis of 2005 test and examination results will be discussed at the meeting.

The Children's Services Improvement Adviser for Education (CSIA(E)) will normally chair the Priorities Meeting and the recently appointed National Strategies' Senior Regional Directors (SRDs) will lead the discussion of education outcomes. The National Strategies' Operations Team are arranging the meetings and aim to agree the dates for all meetings by 31 August 2005. They have already confirmed dates for 84 meetings and we are grateful for LAs commitment to agreeing arrangements so quickly. The agenda for each LA's Priorities



Meeting will be finalised once the draft Annual Performance Assessment (APA) letter has been issued and we have completed our analysis of the 2005 educational performance data. The Department will again share with LAs in advance, the educational data that SRDs and advisers will be using for the discussions.

I would like to draw your attention to the following key points:

- National test results for key Stages 1 and 2 will be published on 23 August. The date for publishing the Key Stage 3 results will be confirmed in mid – August, but I would expect it to be in the first half of September.
- LAs, primary and secondary schools in reviewing their 2005 results are encouraged to take into account whether greater ambition is now possible and reflect this when setting their 2007 targets. LAs and schools are encouraged to look further ahead than one year and set a trajectory to 2008. However, the statutory requirement to set and report targets applies only to the targets for 2007.
- We encourage LAs to support their schools to make effective use of data. Schools should compare their performance against schools with similar intakes and contexts; compare the results of different departments and also compare the results of groups of pupils. We and the National Strategies will work with LAs to identify and support schools that are not stretching their pupils. Our goal is to see children from disadvantaged communities receive the support and stretch they deserve and for all pupils to achieve maximum progress.
- A national Contextual Value Added (CVA) measure is being piloted in secondary School and College Achievement and Attainment Tables in 2005 and in the primary Tables in 2006. The 2005 PAT and PANDAs will contain analysis based on the national model for Key Stages 1-2, 2-3, 2-4 and 3-4 CVA data. The 2005 Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 PAT with national data will be available at the end of September. The 2005 PAT Key Stage 4 national data will be available at the end of October.
- A new online tool is being developed which will bring PAT and PANDA together; this will be available from summer 2006. The online system will be piloted with schools and LAs over the coming year.
- A new Key Stage 3 national curriculum test in ICT will be introduced in 2008, with results published in the Secondary School and College Achievement and Attainment Tables. The test is being developed by the QCA and will be taken on-screen and marked electronically. The introduction of the test is subject to successful pilots being held in 2006 and 2007. Some schools have piloted the on-screen ICT test this year. The early feedback from schools is extremely positive. It also shows how important it is for the pupils' performance that teachers and pupils are familiar with the test process and well prepared. As part of your strategies for improving standards in ICT, and with a view to the eventual publication of school performance in ICT in the School and College Achievement and Attainment tables, we would advise LAs to encourage schools to participate in the pilot test for 2006. That involves a simple accreditation process in order to receive the test software and then making use of the familiarisation and practice materials. Further details are available from the test's website ([www.ks3ictpilot.com](http://www.ks3ictpilot.com)).
- As part of the Primary Leadership Programme, you may be aware that the Primary National Strategy and the National College for School Leadership are offering the chance for 500 high performing schools and 50 early years settings to take part in a "Sustaining Success Programme". This programme aims to provide an opportunity for schools and settings to work in collaboration to increase further the achievement

of the five outcomes for all children and to capture the learning of those involved to disseminate and share more widely with schools and settings.

- Detailed guidance on completing the workbook for submitting the targets will be issued in October. LAs are asked to identify a senior officer who will take responsibility for checking and validating the authority's targets submission before it is returned to the Department. Under the new legislative requirements, LAs now have a new statutory duty to return this no later than 31 January 2006.

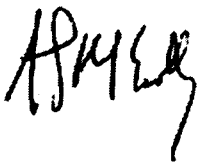
I will write to you again in September once the national results are available, identifying particular issues arising from those results that might form part of discussion at the Priorities Meetings or during the termly discussions which your Primary and Secondary Strategy Managers hold with the National Strategies Primary and Secondary Advisers.

The guidance will be available on our target-setting website and as promised in my letter of 1 June the Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 targets for 2006 along with the minority ethnic group targets have already been published on our website - [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ts/](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ts/)

Please contact Lorna Serieux on 020 7925 6703 if you have any questions about this letter.

Thank you for your full support in continuing the drive towards the highest standards of achievement for all of our pupils in our schools.

Yours sincerely



Andrew McCully  
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