

**CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
12 JANUARY 2011**

**THE 14 – 16 CURRICULUM OFFER IN BRACKNELL FOREST
Director of Children, Young People & Learning**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Following the progress report in respect of the implementation of the 14-19 education entitlement presented in October 2010, this report provides further details of the 14 - 16 curriculum offer in Bracknell Forest schools. The report also outlines some of the possible implications of the Schools White Paper, published on 24 November 2010 and the addendum to the Statement of Intent with regard to the publication of test and examinations results, announced in December 2010.

2 SUGGESTED ACTION

- 2.1 **That the Children Young People & Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel note the Report.**

3 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Recent Developments

- 3.1 Following the announcement by the new coalition government that the requirement for young people to have access to a revised entitlement, including all Diploma lines of learning, by 2013 was to be removed, the Local Authority has discussed the future curriculum offer with local providers, including all six secondary schools and Bracknell and Wokingham College. This considered the provision of Diplomas, the Increased Flexibility Programme, Young Apprenticeships, Foundation Learning and alternative vocational qualifications, including BTECs and OCR Nationals.
- 3.2 The Schools White Paper confirmed that there is to be a review of vocational qualifications, led by Professor Alison Wolf and scheduled to report in the spring of 2011. In addition, there will be a review of the secondary National Curriculum. This document also confirmed that the age of compulsory participation in education or training is to be raised to 17 in 2013 and 18 in 2015.
- 3.3 The Schools White Paper introduced the concept of an English Baccalaureate. The Statement of Intent with regard to the publication of test and examinations results noted that:

'The Government believes that schools should offer pupils a broad range of academic subjects to age 16, and the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) promotes that aspiration.'

'The EBacc is not a new qualification in itself. It will recognise students' achievements across a core of selected academic subjects in getting good passes in rigorous GCSE or iGCSEs. The English Baccalaureate will cover achievement in English, mathematics, sciences, a language and a humanities subject. We intend to mark individual students' future achievements through a certificate.'

'A humanities subject' is further defined as being history or geography.

- 3.4 Bracknell Forest schools remain committed to providing the most appropriate curriculum to meet the diverse needs of our young people. As a result, they will continue to plan the development of vocational learning opportunities and will work in partnership with Bracknell and Wokingham College to deliver these. Given the uncertainty over the future of the new Diploma qualifications, it is likely that there will be only a limited expansion of provision in 2011, Alternative vocational qualifications, notably BTECs, will, however, be available.

The Current Curriculum Offer

- 3.5 Students in our schools were offered the option of taking a Diploma in one of four areas in 2010. Three of these recruited and have now started. These are:

Hair & Beauty at Wick Hill (Bracknell & Wokingham College), Level 2 KS4,
Six Bracknell Forest students (plus students from Wokingham)

Business, Administration & Finance at Brakenhale school, Level 2 KS4,
Eight Bracknell Forest students

IT at Sandhurst school, Level 2 KS4,
Three Bracknell Forest students

These will continue in 2011 and The Diploma in Creative & Media and The Diploma in Hospitality are expected to be introduced at Garth Hill College.

- 3.6 BTEC First Certificate courses were delivered in seven subject areas in 2010. The great majority (499) of the 563 subject entries were in Applied Science. Students also studied Art & Design, Engineering Studies, Health & Social Care, Music Studies, Performing Arts and Sports Studies. Results in all subject areas were good and schools will look to extend participation and expand provision as required.
- 3.7 The collaborative timetable developed to facilitate the delivery of Diplomas has also enabled an increased number of students to access the Young Apprenticeship programme at Bracknell and Wokingham College. This requires students to spend two days each week either at College or in a workplace environment. Young Apprenticeships are available in Hairdressing, Health & Social Care and the Motor Industry. At present 20 young people are engaged in these programmes.
- 3.8 Bracknell & Wokingham College's Eastern Road site has now closed and all 14-16 vocational options provided by the College are now delivered at the Wick Hill site. Bracknell Forest and Wokingham LAs have supported the refurbishment of the facilities which, when this work has been completed, will offer a broader range of improved facilities than was available at Eastern Road. In addition to Diplomas and Young Apprenticeships, other vocational courses in Childcare, Hair & Beauty, Motor Vehicle, Construction, Engineering and Health & Social Care are available at Wick Hill. Approximately 100 students in each Key Stage 4 cohort, drawn from all schools, participate in this provision.
- 3.9 The great majority of young people in Bracknell Forest schools study a range of GCSE or equivalent subjects. All students study English, mathematics and science (17% studied the three separate sciences of Biology, Chemistry and Physics in 2010, with the remainder following core and additional science programmes).

In a cohort of 1128, 930 students studied English Literature in addition to Language. Almost half (547) studied one of the Design & Technology options. Of the other optional subjects, the most popular were:

History – 497 students (44%)
Modern Language – 431 (38%)
Geography – 331 (29%)
Business Studies & Economics – 294 (26%)
Art & Design/Fine Art – 292 (26%)
Religious Studies – 284 (25%)
Sport/PE Studies – 233 (21%)
Information Technology – 224 (20%)

169 students studied Drama & Theatre Studies. Other subjects with between 50 and 100 entries were Catering Studies (98), Child Development (71) and Music (64).

Fewer than 50 students were entered for Media (40), Photography (33), Office Technology (23), Statistics (27), and Dance (21).

- 3.10 All schools now teach functional skills in English, mathematics and ICT. These will be examined as part of GCSE courses in these subjects or as 'stand alone' qualifications. The schools are also exploring ways in which they can work together to combine functional skills, vocational qualifications and certification of personal development learning in more coherent Foundation Learning programmes for those young people who are not able to achieve appropriate outcomes in Level 2 programmes.

GCSE Performance 2010

- 3.11 In the core subjects, 68.5% of students achieved Grade A*-C in English and 63.6% in mathematics. 57% achieved Grade A*-C in both of these subjects. 94% of students taking the three separate science subjects achieved A*-C, whilst 56% achieved A*-C in single/core science and 68% in additional science.
- 3.12 In the most popular Design & Technology options, 78.4% achieved Grade A*-C in Food Technology, 73.3% in Graphic Products and 62.7% in Resistant Materials. In French, 78.3% of the 253 entries achieved A*-C and in German 81.3% out of 139 students achieved this level.
- 3.13 The most successful option subjects were Fine Art (93% Grade A*-C), Music (87%), Art & Design (77%), Religious Studies (75%), Sport/PE Studies (72%) Geography (69%), History (68%) and Drama (67%).
- 3.14 A very high proportion of entries (99%) resulted in students achieving Grade A*-G. Those subjects in which 10 or more students failed to achieve a pass grade were English Literature (12), Business Studies, (10), History (10) and Information Technology (10).

New Measures of Performance

- 3.15 The addendum to the Statement of Intent with regard to the publication of test and examinations results included several new indicators of performance to be included in the School Performance Tables from January 2011. Based on 2010 results, these tables will, for the first time, show the proportion of pupils at school, local authority

and national levels achieving Grades A*-C in both English and mathematics. The intention is to include science in this 'Basics indicator' from next year.

Fischer Family Trust data suggest that:

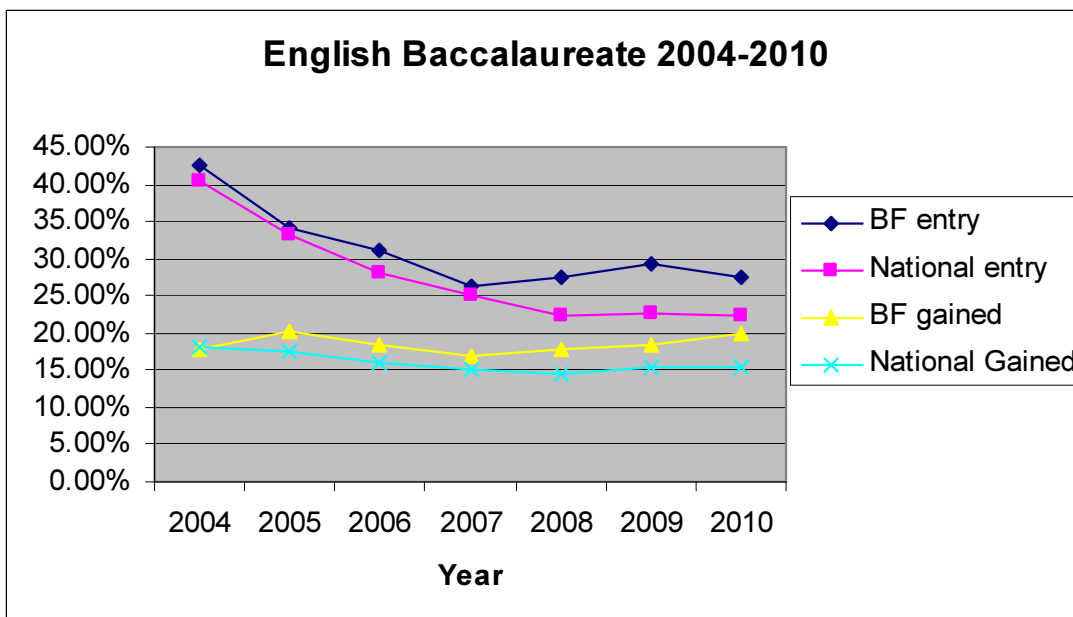
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Achieving A*-C in both English and maths - LA	48.7%	50.25%	53%	52.6%	57%
Achieving A*-C in both English and maths - National	45.8%	47.7%	49.7%	52.1%	56.1%
Achieving A*-C in English maths and science - LA	41.3%	42%	43.6%	44.6%	48.1%
Achieving A*-C in English maths and science - National	37.4%	38.1%	38.2%	39.7%	41.9%

On the basis of this indicator, Bracknell Forest is just above the national average for the proportion achieving the higher grades in both English and mathematics and significantly above the national average when science is added to the indicator.

- 3.16 The School Performance Tables will also show performance at school, local authority, and national level in the combination of subjects which comprise the proposed English Baccalaureate (as defined in para. 2.3 above) alongside the current indicator of the proportion of students achieving 5 or more GCSE Grades A*-C. The definition of the EBacc will be reviewed for the Tables which will reflect the 2011 results.

Fischer Family Trust data suggest that:

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Proportion of cohort entered for the EBacc - LA	31.1%	26.2%	27.5%	29.3%	27.3%
Proportion of cohort entered for the EBacc - National	28%	25%	22.4%	22.7%	22.3%
Proportion of cohort achieving the EBacc - LA	18.3%	17%	18%	18.3%	20.1%
Proportion of cohort achieving the EBacc – Nat.	16.5%	15%	14.6%	15.3%	15.4%



On the basis of this indicator, Bracknell Forest has a higher proportion of young people taking the combination of EBacc subjects than the national average. The proportion of young people achieving Grades A*-C in all of these subjects, and hence achieving the EBacc, is also above the national average.

- 3.17 Although Bracknell Forest is therefore likely to be above the national average when the additional indicators are introduced, the English Baccalaureate has significant implications for the curriculum offer available in individual schools. As the graph above shows, the proportion of students taking the full combination of EBacc subjects has fallen significantly since 2004, although the proportion achieving it has remained relatively stable.

The key factors in the declining numbers taking the full EBacc are the fall in numbers taking a Modern Foreign Language, which was formerly compulsory, and the proportion of students who take either history or geography.

- 3.18 The number of young people studying a Modern Foreign Language remains high at some of our schools but is much lower at others. In part, this reflects the moves in recent years to broaden the curriculum offer to better meet the needs and aspirations of our young people. The relatively narrow definition of 'Humanities' means that a considerable number of students who achieve well will not achieve the EBacc since they chose to study alternative options. In order to achieve the EBacc, it is therefore inevitable that students will have less freedom to choose from the range of optional subjects available. This will also have significant implications for school staffing, since the current balance of specialisms may no longer be appropriate to deliver the EBacc to more students.

Contact for further information

Martin Surrell (Senior Adviser)
 Martin.Surrell@bracknell-forest.gov.uk
 01344 354033