

Press Release

Closing the gap in education services performance:

Continuing GCSE improvements across all Serco-managed services

15 October 2009

Strong improvements in provisional 2009 GCSE exam results were seen across all three local authorities where Serco is responsible for the management of education services, continuing the trend of closing the gap against average performance across English councils. Using the national benchmark of 5 GCSEs including English and maths, rates of improvement in Bradford and Walsall are approximately double the national average since the measure was introduced in 2006. Improvements also outstrip the national average in Stoke-on-Trent since Serco started working with the council in 2007.

Serco were originally introduced into each of these councils to improve education services and bring them closer to national performance standards. Provisional figures released today show that nationally 49.7% of pupils achieved 5 GCSEs including English and maths, an improvement of 3.9 percentage points since the measure was introduced in 2006. During the same period, Bradford and Walsall have seen total percentage points increases of 7.2 and 8.3 respectively, approximately double the national improvement levels.

Schools across the Bradford district are particularly pleased following record level results at GCSE for 5 A*-C grades including English and maths. At 41%, this represents an impressive 4.3 percentage points rise on last year's results. MD for Education Bradford (Serco), Denise Faulconbridge said, "Children, their teachers, school staff, Governors and parent deserve to be congratulated for their hard work in bringing about such improvements.

Walsall was equally delighted with this year's results at 43.2%, which continue the year on year trend of outstripping national improvements, narrowing the gap from 10.9 percentage points in 2006 to 6.5 percentage points this year. Tony Stainer, MD for Walsall Children's Services – Serco commented, "Performance for GCSEs with English and Mathematics has continued to improve and we will continue to work with all schools and most importantly work to provide the best education for children and young people in Walsall. "

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Stoke-on-Trent pupils made consistent improvements since Serco were brought in to work with the council. Provisional figures for GCSEs including English and maths reach 40% for the first time, with the rate excluding English and maths (the national benchmark prior to 2006) at 70% now above the national average. Said Serco's Ged Rowney, Director of Children's Services at Stoke-on-Trent, "This is another year of real progress and my congratulations go to the young people, their teachers and their families for these wonderful results. Education is going through a major transformation in the city and results like these are an encouraging sign that bodes well for the future".

Elaine Simpson, MD of Serco's Education and Children's Services business summed up, "Naturally we are delighted by these great results across all 3 of the authorities where we work in partnership. Praise must of course go first and foremost to the pupils, their parents and teachers who have worked so hard to achieve these results. However I am also delighted with the achievements of our staff and Council staff who work tirelessly in partnership with schools, governors and other partners to enable these children to achieve."

Notes

1. Serco provides education services on behalf of 3 local authorities. In 2008, Walsall Council re-appointed Serco to provide education services following a rigorous procurement process, having worked with Serco since 2001 following central government intervention. Bradford Council appointed Serco to run its full education service in 2001 following central government intervention. Stoke-on-Trent Council appointed Serco to provide a management service for both education and children's services in 2007 following central government intervention.
2. For today's national announcement see http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/news/content.cfm?landing=coaker_substantial_rise_in_maintained_schools_gcse_results&type=1

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3. The following table shows the performance of pupils in achieving 5 GCSEs A*-C including English and maths in Bradford, Stoke-on-Trent, Walsall and England between 2006-2009.

Source: ONS/DCSF

	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	Latest year improvement (percentage points)	Improvement since 2006 (percentage points)
Bradford	34	36.3	36.9	41.2	4.3	7.2
Stoke-on-Trent	(prior to Serco)	35	37.1	40.0	2.9	5 (since 2007)
Walsall	34.9	36.2	40.9	43.2	2.3	8.3
National	45.8	46.7	47.6	49.7	2.1	3.9

4. The full improvements seen since Serco has worked with Bradford and Walsall from 2001 are evident from the previous benchmark monitored by government , for 5 GCSEs A*-C (any subjects). The table below identifies that performance growth at both authorities have outstripped national growth, with the gap continually reducing.

	2000/01		2008/9		Improvement 01-09
	%	(National Gap)	%	(National Gap)	
Bradford	34.3	(15.7)	62.6	(7.1)	28.3
Walsall	40.6	(9.4)	64.1	(5.6)	23.5
National	50.0		69.7	-	19.7

(End)

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About Serco in Education and Children's Services

Serco works in partnership with National and Local Government Children's Services bodies to provide strategic support, increase organisational capacity and enhance capability. We provide management of the full Children's Services at Stoke-on-Trent Council and Education services at Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council and Bradford Metropolitan Council. We are the lead partner in the Together for Children programme, which is providing support and challenge to all local authorities in England that will enable the rollout of 3500 children's centres by 2010. We are also the lead partner in the Together for Disabled Children programme, which provides supports the Aiming High for Disabled Children short breaks programme and development of parent participation forums. In February 2009, Serco were appointed inspections service provider by Ofsted to delivering inspections to schools, further education colleges, and work-based learning organisations in the central England region, one of three regions nationally. Serco also delivers a range of leadership training programmes on behalf of the National College, the Welsh Assembly, the Scottish Executive and other government agencies.

About Serco

Serco is a FTSE 100 international service company which combines commercial know-how with a deep public service ethos.

We improve services by managing people, processes, technology and assets more effectively. We advise policy makers, design innovative solutions, integrate systems and - most of all - deliver to the public.

Serco supports governments, agencies and companies who seek a trusted partner with a solid track record of providing assured service excellence. Our people offer operational, management and consulting expertise in the aviation, BPO, defence, education, health, home affairs, local government, science, technology, transport and the commercial sectors.

More information can be found at www.serco.com.