SCHOOLS AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

What’s the issue?

“Literacy is the combination of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills we all need to fulfil our potential. These life skills are essential to the happiness, health and wealth of individuals and society” [171]. In England, 15% of working-age adults struggle with literacy with their literacy below levels expected of an eleven year old, but this is 26% among people living in most deprived 25% of areas nationally (and only 5% among those living in least deprived 25% of areas) [172]. “Concerns over staff literacy are widespread. Of employers who rate the competency of their low-skilled staff as poor or satisfactory, over half report problems with literacy [173]. Men and women with poor literacy are less likely to be in full-time employment at the age of thirty, and poor literacy skills can also be a serious barrier to progressing once in employment with 63% of men and 75% of women with very low literacy skills having never received a promotion [174]. There are too many adults who lack basic literacy skills” [171]. “Whilst 92% of the British public say literacy is vital to the economy, and essential for getting a good job [175], a quarter of children and young people do not recognise a link between reading and success [176]” [171]. Fourteen percent of children and young people in lower income homes rarely or never read their books for pleasure [177]. One in five parents easily find the opportunity to read to their children, with the rest struggling to read to their children due to fatigue and busy lifestyles [171]. Marmot in his strategic review of health inequalities in England post-2010 [150] stated that “Parental involvement in their child’s reading has been found to be the most important determinant of language and emergent literacy [151].”

A high percentage of the working-age population in England have poor numeracy. Overall, 49% have numeracy skills below the expected levels of an eleven year old, but this is 35% among those with an Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD; see the JSNA section on deprivation and poverty, www.hullpublichealth.org/jsna2017.html#7) of 0-9 (least deprived 25% of areas) and 62% and 72% among those with an IMD score 30-39 and 40+ (combined most deprived 25%) [172].

Among working-age adults who live in areas with an IMD score of 50+ (most deprived 7% of areas of England), 64%, 53% and 62% are at Level 21 or below in relation to word processing, email and spreadsheets respectively (compared to 28%, 20% and 28% among those with a IMD score of 1-9) [172].

As mentioned in the JSNA school age children section (www.hullpublichealth.org/jsna2017.html#40) “Good education improves career prospects, raises aspirations, and gives people more financial control over their lives. Poor education and training, and low educational attainment can affect confidence, aspirations, and increase the risk of lifelong unemployment, benefit dependency or low paid employment” [170]. These factors have a strong influence on health and wellbeing. Children (and adults) with low confidence and aspirations, and with low educational attainment are more likely to make poor choices in their lives, are less likely to achieve well-paid satisfying regular employment, have poor resilience, and increase the likelihood of poor health and wellbeing. See the JSNA section on school age children (www.hullpublichealth.org/jsna2017.html#40) for more information on special educational needs and Education, Health and Care plans.

What’s our situation?

For 2015/16, 65% of children in Hull (59% of boys and 72% of girls) achieved good development at the end of reception year compared to 69% for England, although among children eligible for free school meals the percentages in Hull were higher than England (58% versus 54%) [26]. From analysis of local data for 2014/15 [27], the percentages varied from 51% in Myton ward to 76% in Beverley ward. There was a strong association with deprivation, and with ethnicity (even after the

1 Level 2 refers to being able to use Information and Communications Technology to “communicate, as well as enter and edit small amounts of information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience”.

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effect of deprivation had been taking into account). In 2015/16, among the 38,503 children attending Hull mainstream state-maintained primary or secondary schools, 1,337 (3.5%) had Special Educational Needs (SEN) Statements or a Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan (3.2% for England), and a further 5,454 (14.2%) required SEN support (11.5% for England) [21]. There are a further 598 pupils attending special schools in Hull, although not all of these pupils will live in Hull. For 4,336 (11.3%) of pupils, English was not their first language and 36.2% of pupils had been eligible for free school meals at some point in the last six years (England 23.9%). For 2015/16, the percentage of half-days missed (authorised and unauthorised absence) by primary (4.3%), secondary (5.4%) and special school pupils (8.2%) was higher than England for primary and secondary but not for special schools (4.0%, 5.2% and 9.1% respectively) with 9.8%, 14.7% and 25.8% of pupils from primary, secondary and special schools respectively persistently absent (missing 10% or more of all half-day sessions) which was also higher than England for primary and secondary schools, but not for special schools (8.2%, 13.1% and 26.9% respectively) [21]. For 2015/16, 46.3% of students in Hull achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A-C which included English and mathematics, and just over half achieved GCSEs at grades A-C in both English and mathematics (51.1%), but these percentages were 59.3% and 53.5% respectively for maintained schools in England [21].

From the 2011 Census [15, 16], almost twice as many adults (27.4%) in England were qualified to degree level or higher compared to Hull (15.2%), and half as many again people in Hull (31.7%) had no qualifications compared to England (22.5%). From the local adult Health and Lifestyle Survey 2011-12 [63], large differences in the highest educational attainment were evident across the wards in Hull.

For more detailed information, see the JSNA Toolkit: Deprivation and Associated Measures report.

What are the strategic needs?

As a good education is very important for future health and wellbeing, it is essential that children are ready for school, and children and young people are able to maximise their achievements whilst at school, college and university, so that they can have good employment prospects.

It is important that there should be early help for the children and young people, and their families who need additional support, and that the support is timely, accessible and appropriate for their circumstances. There should be a focus of resources on identifying risks and intervening early to improve maternal health and wellbeing, promoting positive parenting skills, and creating an environment for children and young people that builds self-esteem and resilience. See the JSNA section on early years (www.hullpublichealth.org/jsna2017.html#36) for more information on Hull’s Early Help and Priority Families Strategy 2015–2020 [76].

There should be promotion of physical and mental wellbeing across all settings including schools and workplaces.

Everybody should have the opportunity to improve their employment and life choices through increased education, training and knowledge.
References