

## 6. CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES

### 6.9 Early Years Development

Experiences during the early years affect the rest of our lives, from our physical and mental health and wellbeing to how well we do at school and in employment, and how financially secure we are in later life. The early years generally include the period between birth and the age of five, but what happens during pregnancy and birth also has a critical influence throughout infancy and childhood. This section explores a number of development-related metrics collected within Health Visitor and Early Years services.

#### *6.9.1 The importance of early years development*

A child's early years are formative physiologically, cognitively, socially and emotionally, and these developmental areas are intricately linked, so deficits in one area can cause problems in another. Ensuring all children can develop to achieve their full potential, and get the help and public resource to provide support where this is needed, can make a huge difference to how that child will grow into an adult contributing to society.

#### *6.9.2 Information on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) profile*

The statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)<sup>1</sup> sets standards for the development, learning and care of children from birth to age 5. This requires the EYFS profile assessment to be carried out in the final term of the year in which a pupil reaches age 5. The main purpose of the EYFS profile is to provide a reliable, valid and accurate assessment of individual pupils, to support a smooth transition to Key Stage 1 and help Year 1 teachers plan a curriculum that will meet the needs of all children. The profile is also designed to inform parents or carers about their child's development against the early learning goals (ELGs). In addition, it provides an accurate national dataset relating to levels of child development at the end of the EYFS which is used by the Department for Education to monitor levels of children's development and their readiness for the next phase of their education.

The EYFS profile is a teacher/practitioner assessment, which should be carried out in all English providers of state-funded Early Years education. During the final year of the EYFS, practitioners carry out ongoing (formative) assessment to support each pupil's learning and development. There is no requirement for how they record this or specifically when assessments take place. In the final term of the EYFS they

review information from all sources to make a judgement for each pupil, for each ELG. The judgement must say whether the pupil's learning and development is:

**Expected:** best described by the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS;

**Emerging:** not yet at the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS;

**Exceeding:** beyond the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS.

There are 17 ELGs which are grouped into 7 learning areas (Table 1). The proportion of all children who are assessed as 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeded' for each ELG is reported, along with the **proportion who achieved at least the expected standard**, which means they achieved 'expected' or 'exceeded'. In addition, children are defined as having reached **a good level of development** if they achieve at least the expected level in the ELGs in the 3 prime areas of learning (i.e. personal, social and emotional development, physical development, and communication and language) and the ELGs in the specific areas of mathematics and literacy.

### *6.9.3 Information about children in the early years in Buckinghamshire*

At the end of the academic year 2014/15, 6,386 pupils who turned five were assessed by their teachers for their EYFS profile in Buckinghamshire. Table 1 below shows a summary of the findings for each ELG.

Table 2 and Figure 1 show the number of children eligible for the EYFS and proportion achieving a good level of development in Buckinghamshire compared to the England and South East averages for the three years 2012/13 to 2014/15. The proportion achieving a good level of development in Buckinghamshire was significantly higher than the England average, but significantly lower than the South East average in 2014/15. The increase during this period in Buckinghamshire is in line with the trend seen nationally and in the South East.

**Table 1 EYFS Profile attainment by each early learning goal, Buckinghamshire, 2014/15**

| Learning Areas                             | ELG goal areas                            | % Emerging | % Expected | % Exceeded | % at least expected |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|---------------------|
| Communication and Language                 | 1: Listening and attention                | 12.2       | 64.6       | 23.2       | 87.8                |
|                                            | 2: Understanding                          | 12         | 64.1       | 23.9       | 88                  |
|                                            | 3: Speaking                               | 13         | 67.7       | 19.3       | 87                  |
| Physical Development                       | 4: Moving and handling                    | 8.6        | 71.7       | 19.7       | 91.4                |
|                                            | 5: Health and self-care                   | 6.2        | 74.6       | 19.2       | 93.8                |
| Personal, Social and Emotional Development | 6: Self-confidence and self-awareness     | 9          | 72.5       | 18.5       | 91                  |
|                                            | 7: Managing feelings and behaviour        | 9.7        | 74         | 16.3       | 90.3                |
|                                            | 8: Making relationships                   | 8.5        | 75.1       | 16.4       | 91.5                |
| Literacy                                   | 9: Reading                                | 19.1       | 59         | 21.9       | 80.9                |
|                                            | 10: Writing                               | 25.5       | 59.5       | 15         | 74.5                |
| Mathematics                                | 11: Numbers                               | 19         | 63.2       | 17.8       | 81                  |
|                                            | 12: Shape, space and measures             | 14.7       | 69.7       | 15.6       | 85.3                |
| Understanding the World                    | 13: People and communities                | 10.2       | 76         | 13.7       | 89.8                |
|                                            | 14: The World                             | 11         | 72.8       | 16.1       | 89                  |
|                                            | 15: Technology                            | 5.9        | 82.3       | 11.8       | 94.1                |
| Expressive arts and design                 | 16: Exploring and using media & materials | 9          | 73.2       | 17.8       | 91                  |
|                                            | 17: Being imaginative                     | 9.3        | 75.1       | 15.6       | 90.7                |

Source: [Statistics: early years foundation stage profile](#)

**Achieved at least expected** is the percentage of all eligible children achieving 'expected' or 'exceeded'.

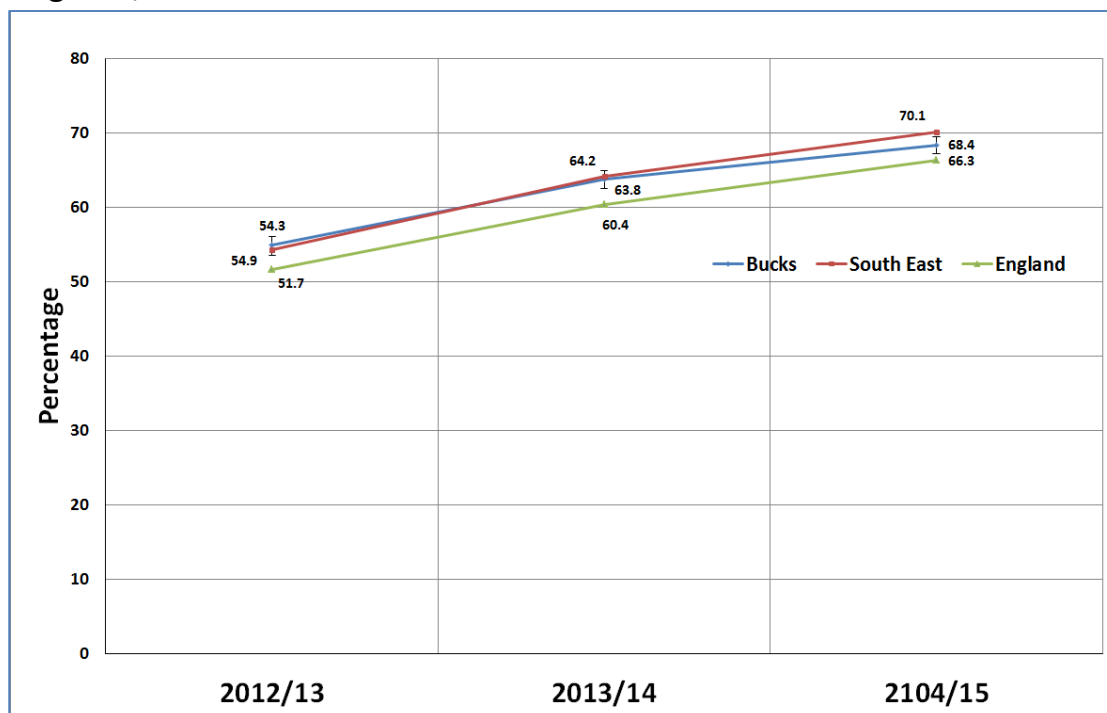
**Table 2 Numbers eligible and proportion achieving a good level of development at the end of reception, Buckinghamshire 2012/13-2014/15**

|                | Total eligible | Boys  | Girls | % achieving good level of development |
|----------------|----------------|-------|-------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>2012/13</b> | 6,251          | 3,212 | 3,039 | 54.9%                                 |
| <b>2013/14</b> | 6,095          | 3,112 | 2,983 | 63.8%                                 |
| <b>2014/15</b> | 6,386          | 3,301 | 3,085 | 68.4%                                 |

Source: Department for Education (DfE), EYFS Profile: EYFS Profile statistical series

A pupil achieving at least the expected level in the ELGs within the three prime areas of learning (communication, physical development and PSED) and within literacy and mathematics is classed as having a **good level of development**

**Figure 1 Proportion of all eligible children achieving a good level of development at the end of reception, Buckinghamshire, South East and England, 2012/13-2014/15**



Source: Department for Education (DfE), EYFS Profile: EYFS Profile statistical series

A pupil achieving at least the expected level in the ELGs within the three prime areas of learning (communication, physical development and PSED) and within literacy and mathematics is classed as having a **good level of development**

#### 6.9.4 Early years development in different population groups

##### 6.9.4.1 Gender

Figure 3 shows gender differences in the EYFS profile for three summary measures; the proportion achieving at least the expected level of development (ie. 'expected' or 'exceeded') across all ELGs; the proportion achieving a good level of development; and the average total point score. The **average total point score** takes into account performance across all 17 ELGs by giving 1 point for emerging, 2 for expected and 3 for exceeding. The sum is then taken for all pupils and the mean given as the average total point score.

Overall, the EYFS profile scores are better among girls than among boys, and this pattern is found in Buckinghamshire, the South East and England. While scores improved in both girls and boys over the 3 years, the improvement was greater among boys in 2014/15 meaning that the gap between girls and boys was smaller in that year than in the previous 2 years.

**Table 3 Gender gap in the EYFS profile scores in Buckinghamshire, South East and England, 2012/13-2014/15**

| Area            | Year    | Average Total Point Score |      |     | % Achieving at least expected level across all ELGs |      |      | % Achieving a good level of development |      |      |
|-----------------|---------|---------------------------|------|-----|-----------------------------------------------------|------|------|-----------------------------------------|------|------|
|                 |         | Girls                     | Boys | Gap | Girls                                               | Boys | Gap  | Girls                                   | Boys | Gap  |
| Buckinghamshire | 2012/13 | 34.3                      | 32.3 | 2.0 | 60.3                                                | 45.3 | 15.0 | 62.0                                    | 48.1 | 13.9 |
|                 | 2013/14 | 35.4                      | 33.3 | 2.0 | 70.6                                                | 53.9 | 16.7 | 71.8                                    | 56.1 | 15.7 |
|                 | 2014/15 | 36.1                      | 34.0 | 2.1 | 74.2                                                | 59.6 | 14.6 | 75.3                                    | 61.9 | 13.5 |
| South East      | 2012/13 | 34.8                      | 32.5 | 2.3 | 61.0                                                | 43.6 | 17.3 | 62.6                                    | 46.4 | 16.2 |
|                 | 2013/14 | 35.9                      | 33.5 | 2.3 | 71.6                                                | 53.8 | 17.8 | 72.8                                    | 55.9 | 16.9 |
|                 | 2014/15 | 36.4                      | 34.0 | 2.4 | 77.0                                                | 60.7 | 16.3 | 78.0                                    | 62.5 | 15.5 |
| England         | 2012/13 | 34.1                      | 31.6 | 2.5 | 57.6                                                | 40.6 | 17.1 | 59.9                                    | 43.9 | 16.0 |
|                 | 2013/14 | 35.1                      | 32.6 | 2.5 | 66.8                                                | 49.6 | 17.3 | 68.7                                    | 52.4 | 16.3 |
|                 | 2014/15 | 35.7                      | 33.1 | 2.6 | 72.6                                                | 56.0 | 16.6 | 74.3                                    | 58.6 | 15.6 |

Source: Department for Education (DfE), EYFS Profile: EYFS Profile statistical series.

The **average total point score** takes into account performance across all 17 ELGs; 1 point for emerging, 2 for expected, and 3 for exceeding. The sum is taken for all pupils and the mean given as the average total point score.

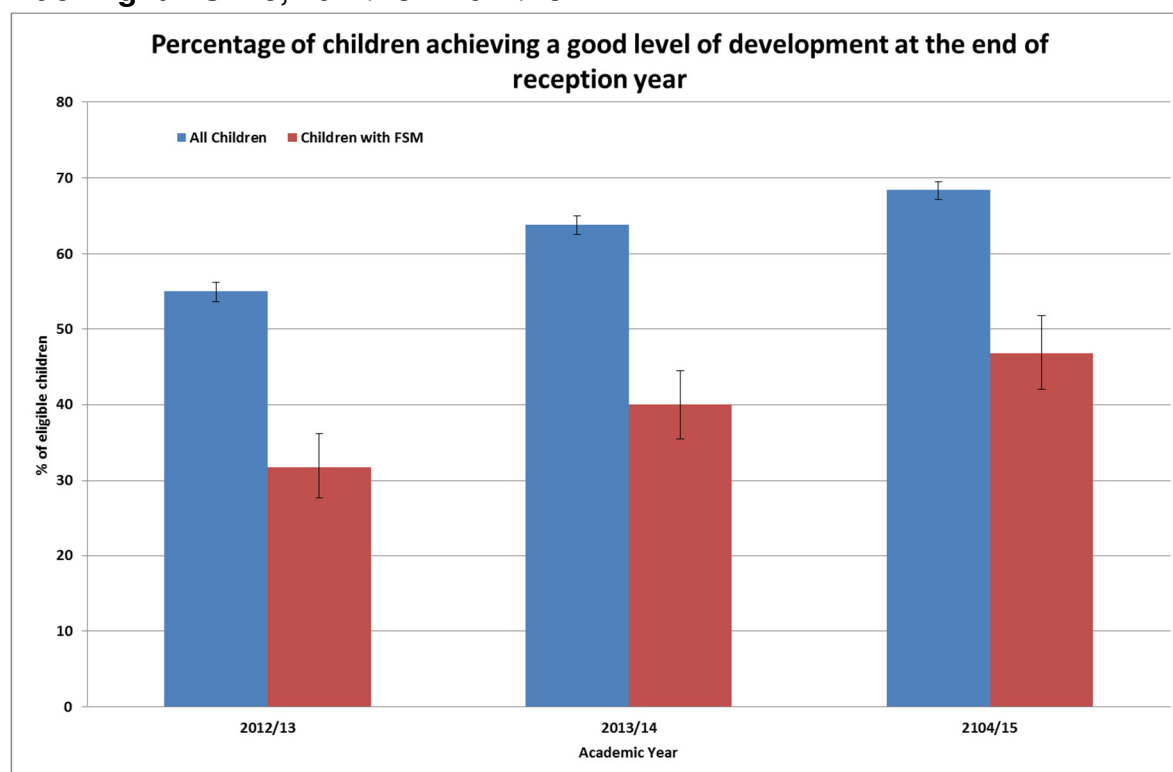
**Achieved at least the expected standard across all ELGs** means they achieved 'expected' or 'exceeded' in all 17 ELGs.

A pupil achieving at least the expected level in the ELGs within the three prime areas of learning (communication, physical development and PSED) and within literacy and mathematics is classed as having a **good level of development**

#### 6.9.4.2 Deprivation

Children from more deprived backgrounds are more at risk of poorer development and the evidence shows that differences by social background emerge early in life. Children who are eligible for free school meals can be used as a proxy for those who come from more deprived backgrounds<sup>2</sup>. As shown in figure 2, in Buckinghamshire in 2014/15 the proportion of children eligible for free school meals who achieved a good level of development at the end of reception was 32% lower than the proportion of all children who achieved a good level of development. While this gap had fallen from 42% in 2012/13, it is still a significant difference. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals in Buckinghamshire who achieve a good level of development at the end of reception has also been consistently lower than the England and South East averages over the 3-year period (table 4).

**Figure 2 Proportion of all children, and of children eligible for free school meals, achieving a good level of development at the end of reception, Buckinghamshire, 2012/13 – 2014/15**



Source: Department for Education (DfE), EYFS Profile: EYFS Profile statistical series

A pupil achieving at least the expected level in the ELGs within the three prime areas of learning (communication, physical development and PSED) and within literacy and mathematics is classed as having a **good level of development**

**Table 4 Proportion of all children, and of children eligible for free school meals, achieving a good level of development at the end of reception, Buckinghamshire, South East and England, 2012/13 – 2014/15**

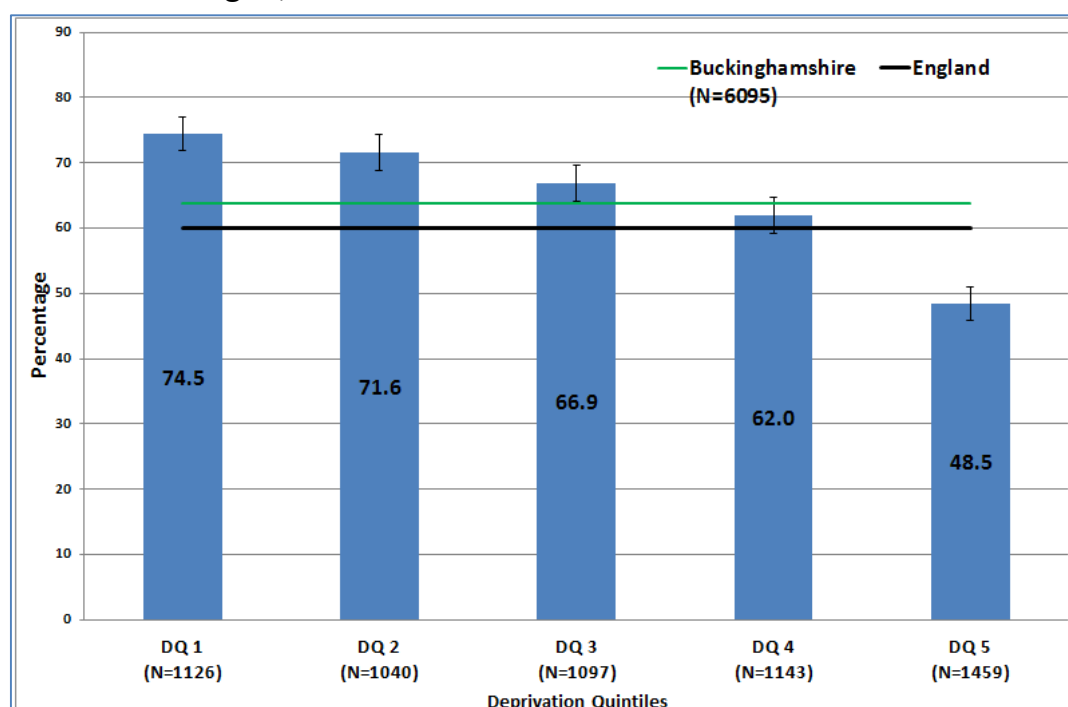
|         | Buckinghamshire |                   |              | South East   |                   | England      |                   |
|---------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------------|
|         | All Children    | Children with FSM | % gap        | All children | Children with FSM | All children | Children with FSM |
| 2012/13 | 54.9%           | 31.8%             | <b>42.1%</b> | 54.3%        | 36.8%             | 51.7%        | 36.2%             |
| 2013/14 | 63.8%           | 40.0%             | <b>37.3%</b> | 64.2%        | 46.0%             | 60.4%        | 44.8%             |
| 2104/15 | 68.4%           | 46.8%             | <b>31.6%</b> | 70.1%        | 53.0%             | 66.3%        | 51.2%             |

Source: Department for Education (DfE), EYFS Profile: EYFS Profile statistical series

A pupil achieving at least the expected level in the ELGs within the three prime areas of learning (communication, physical development and PSED) and within literacy and mathematics is classed as having a **good level of development**

Figure 3 shows the proportion of children achieving a good level of development in the EYFS profile score in Buckinghamshire by deprivation quintiles in 2014/15. Almost three-quarters of children (74.5%) in the least deprived quintile (DQ1) in Buckinghamshire achieved a good level of development in the EYFS profile score, significantly higher than the most deprived three quintiles (DQ 3-5). Under half (48.5%) of children in the most deprived quintile (DQ5) achieved a good level of development during the same period, which was significantly lower than all the other quintile groups in Buckinghamshire. The percentage gap between children in DQ5 (most deprived) and DQ1 (least) was 34.9%.

**Figure 3 Proportion of children achieving a good level of development by deprivation quintiles in Buckinghamshire, compared to the county and national averages, 2014/15**



Source: Department for Education (DfE), EYFS Profile: EYFS Profile statistical series

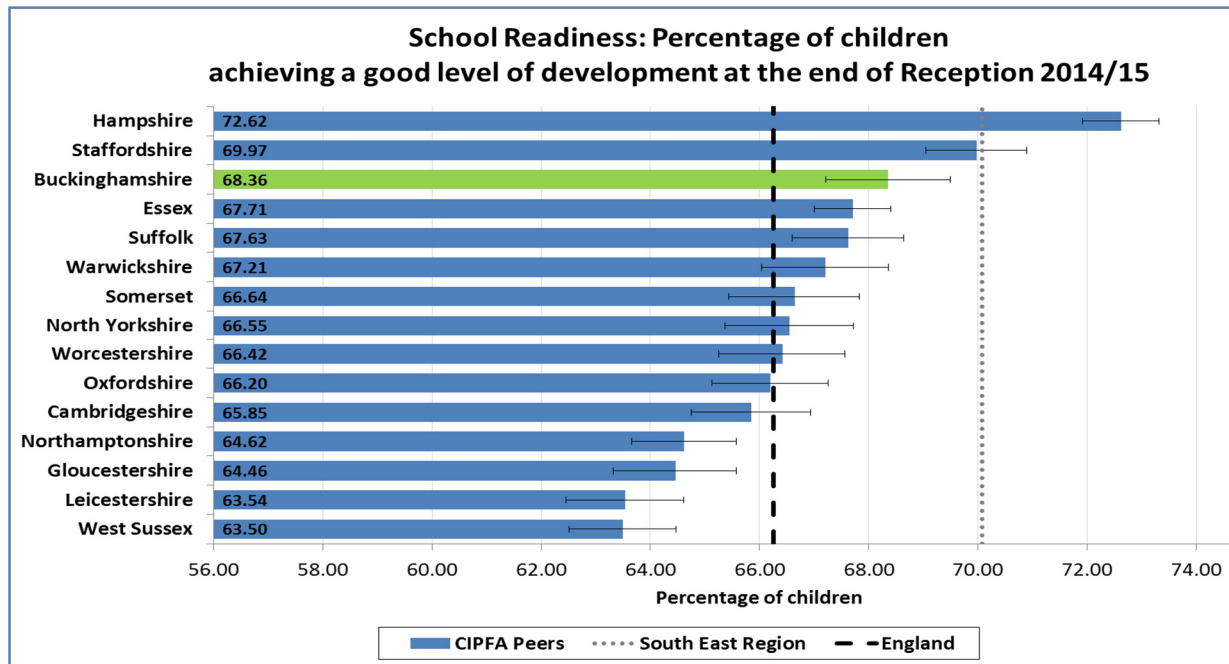
Note: Children are assigned to a deprivation quintile based on their home postcode. There are some pupils who attend Buckinghamshire schools but live outside the county - these pupils are included within the overall Buckinghamshire figure, but will not be included in any of the Deprivation Quintile figures.  
 DQ1: least deprived      DQ5: most deprived

### 6.9.5 Early years development in different geographical areas

Figure 4 shows the proportion of all children achieving a good level of development at the end of reception in Buckinghamshire compared with its CIPFA peer Local Authorities. Buckinghamshire ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> best out of 15, and was significantly better than England but significantly worse than the South East average. For children eligible for free school meals Buckinghamshire ranked 7<sup>th</sup> best out of the 15 local

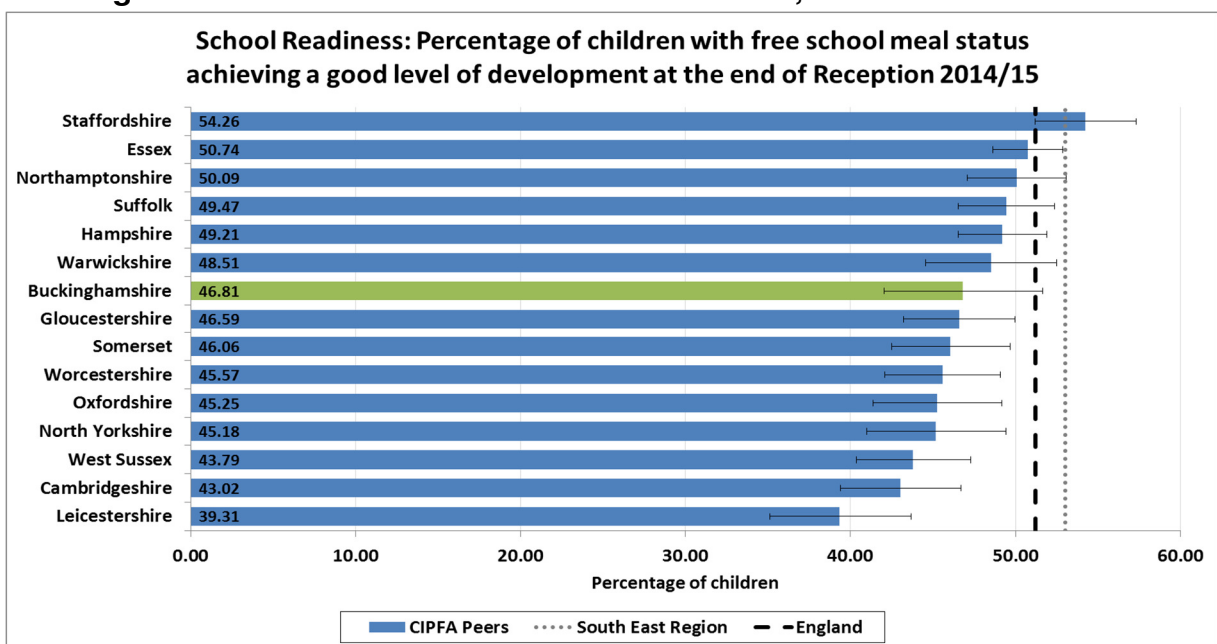
authorities, but only 46.8% of children with free school meal status achieved a good level of development, significantly lower than the South East average (53%), and lower than but statistically similar to the England average (51.2%) (figure 5).

**Figure 4 School Readiness: The percentage of all children achieving a good level of development at the end of reception, Buckinghamshire and CIPFA Peer Local Authorities, 2014/15**



Source: Department for Education (DfE), EYFS Profile: EYFS Profile statistical series

**Figure 5 School Readiness: The percentage of children with free school meal status achieving a good level of development at the end of reception, Buckinghamshire and CIPFA Peer Local Authorities, 2014/15**

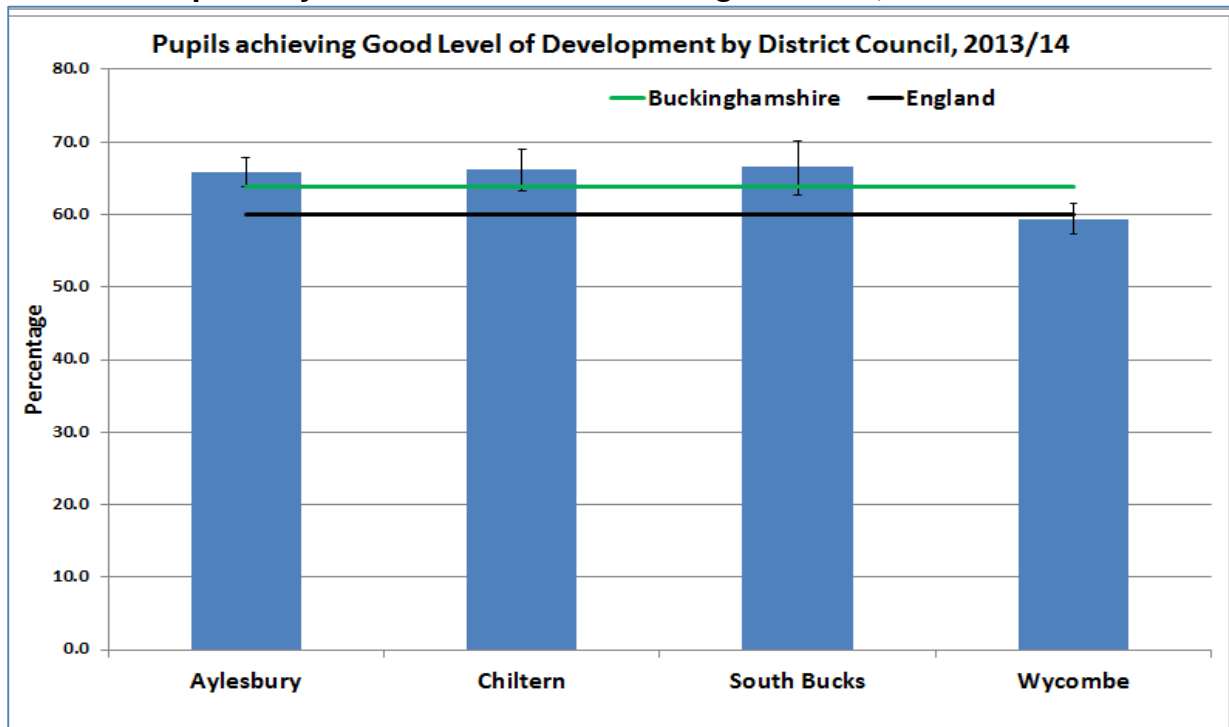


Source: Department for Education (DfE), EYFS Profile: EYFS Profile statistical series



Table 5 and figure 6 show EYFS profile results by District Council in Buckinghamshire in 2013/14. The proportion achieving a good level of development was significantly lower in Wycombe than in the other areas and the Buckinghamshire average. The average point score was also lowest in Wycombe, but this was not a statistically significant difference.

**Figure 6 Percentage of children achieving a good level of development at the end of reception by District Council in Buckinghamshire, 2013/14**



Source: Department for Education (DfE), EYFS Profile: EYFS Profile statistical series

A pupil achieving at least the expected level in the ELGs within the three prime areas of learning (communication, physical development and PSED) and within literacy and mathematics is classed as having a **good level of development**

**Table 5 School Readiness: Percentage of children achieving a good level of development, and average total point score at the end of reception by District Council in Buckinghamshire, 2013/14**

| District Council Area  | Number of pupils with EYFSP results | Pupils achieving a "good level of development" <sup>1</sup><br>%, (95% CI) | Average Total Point Score <sup>2</sup><br>%, (95% CI) |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Aylesbury              | 2133                                | 65.9 (63.9 -67.9)                                                          | 34.5 (32.5-36.5)                                      |
| Chiltern               | 993                                 | 66.2 (63.2-69.1)                                                           | 35.2 (32.3-38.2)                                      |
| South Buckinghamshire  | 625                                 | 66.6 (62.8 - 70.2)                                                         | 35.3 (31.7-39.1)                                      |
| Wycombe                | 2114                                | 59.4 (57.3 -61.5)                                                          | 33.4 (31.4-35.4)                                      |
| <b>Buckinghamshire</b> | <b>6095</b>                         | <b>63.8</b> (62.6-65.0)                                                    | <b>34.3</b> (33.1-35.5)                               |

Source: Department for Education (DfE), EYFS Profile: EYFS Profile statistical series

Note: Children are assigned to an area based on their home postcode. There are some pupils who attend Buckinghamshire schools but live outside the county - these pupils are included within the overall Buckinghamshire figure, but will not be included in any of the District Council areas.

A pupil achieving at least the expected level in the ELGs within the three prime areas of learning (communication, physical development and PSED) and within literacy and mathematics is classed as having **a good level of development**

The **average total point score** takes into account performance across all 17 ELGs; 1 point for emerging, 2 for expected, and 3 for exceeding. The sum is taken for all pupils and the mean given as the average total point score.

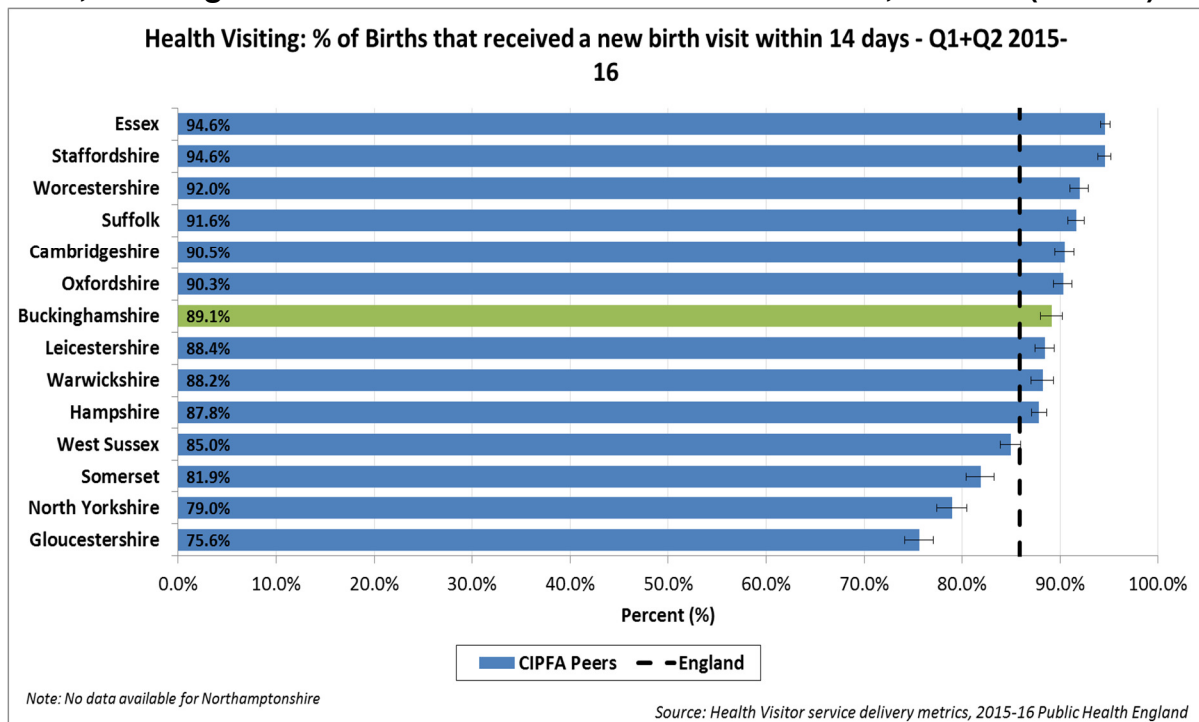
#### 6.9.6 Health Visitor development reviews

All babies have regular health and development reviews during their early years, carried out by a Health Visitor or a member of the health visiting team. Four key child development reviews are mandated and carried out to a standard format; the new baby review (within 14 days after birth), the 6 to 8 week assessment, the one year assessment and the 2 to 2½ year review. Health Visitor Service Delivery metrics have been developed nationally to provide assurance on service transformation in England, and are currently available for the first two quarters of 2015/16. These are shown for Buckinghamshire and its CIPFA peer Local Authorities in figures 7 – 10.

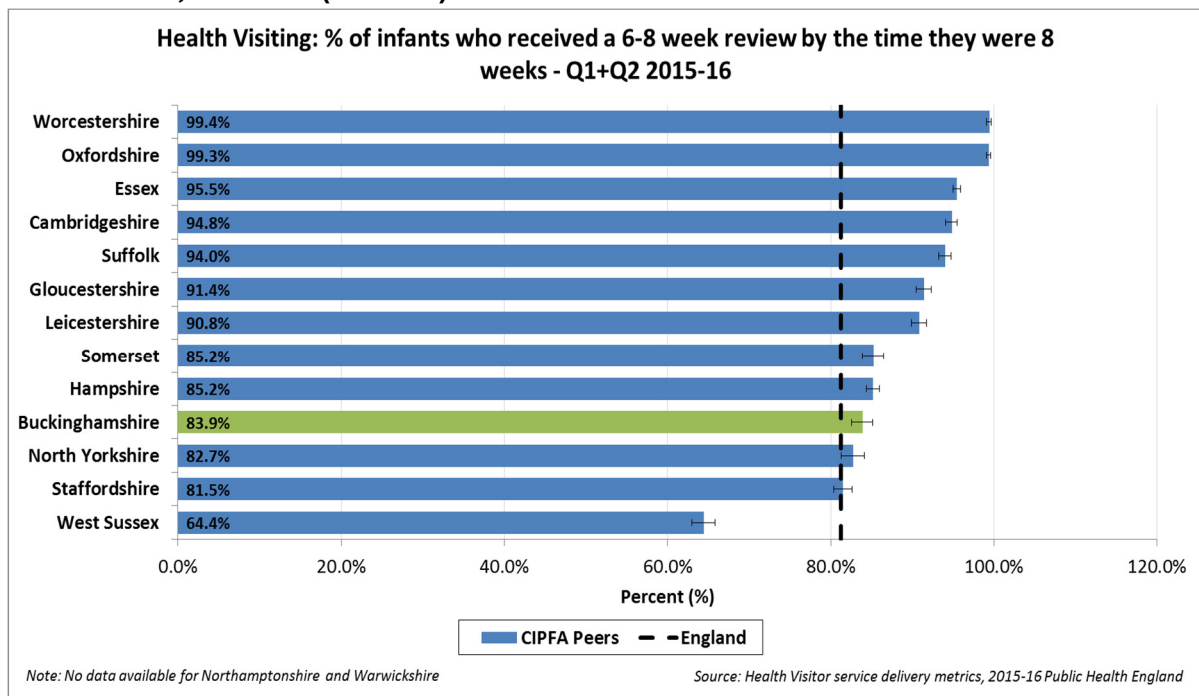
In Buckinghamshire, 89% of babies were reviewed by Health Visitors within 14 days after birth, 7th highest among the 14 CIPFA Peers and significantly higher than the England average. The proportion who had a 6-8 week review by 8 weeks was 84% in Buckinghamshire, 10th highest among the CIPFA Peers and also significantly better than the England average.

However, the proportion of 1 year and 2 to 2½ year reviews carried out in Buckinghamshire were 69% and 59% respectively, which were 12<sup>th</sup> and lowest respectively among the CIPFA peer group, and both significantly lower than the England averages.

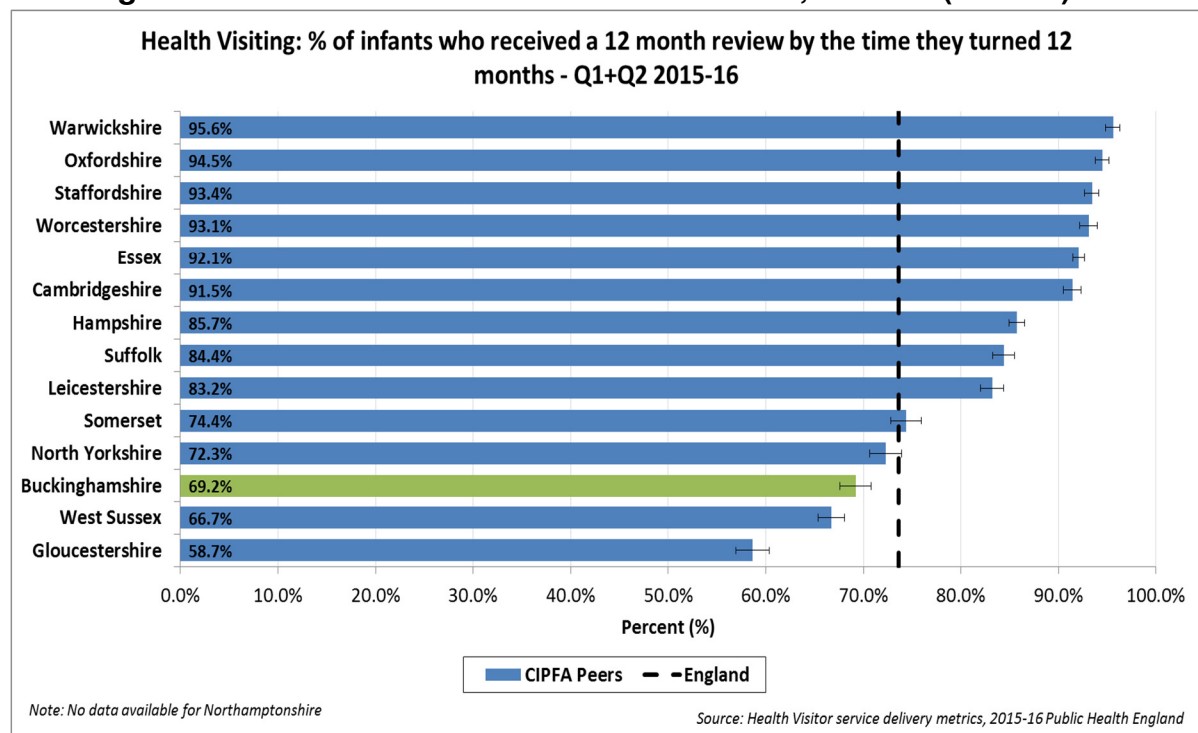
**Figure 7 Proportion of babies reviewed by Health Visitors within 14 days of birth, Buckinghamshire and CIPFA Peer Local Authorities, 2015/16 (Q1&Q2)**



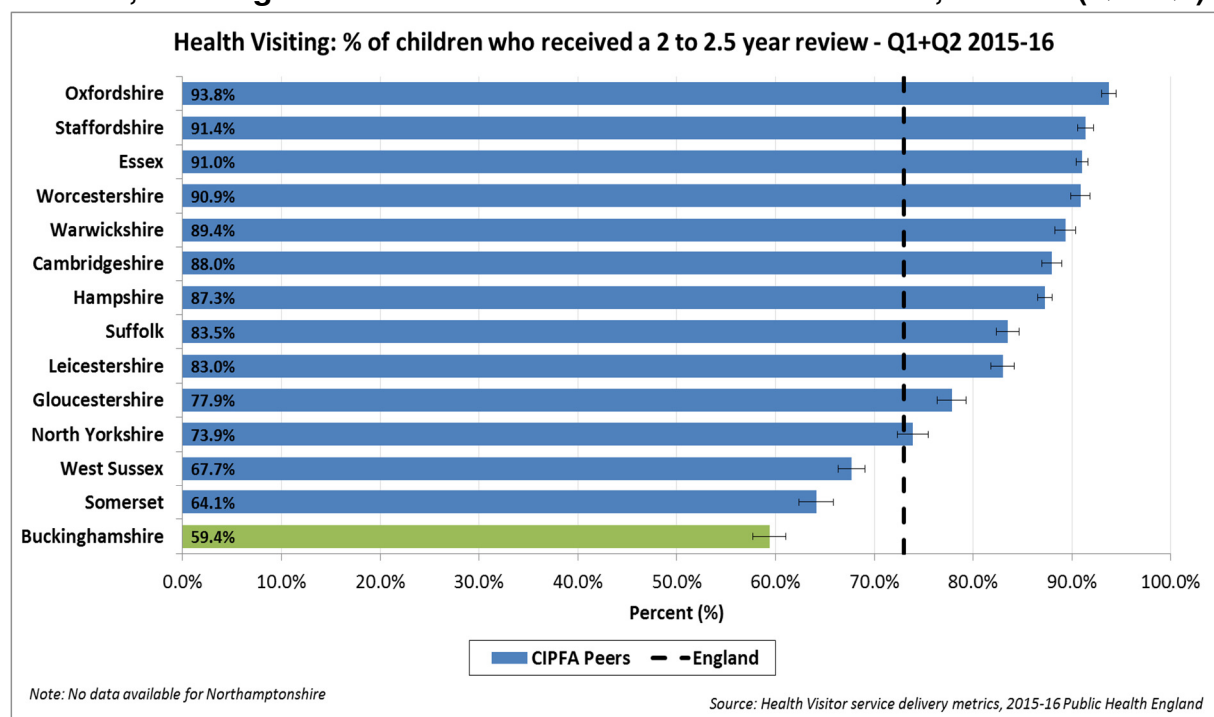
**Figure 8 Proportion of babies who had a 6-8 week review by Health Visitors by the time they were 8 weeks old, Buckinghamshire and CIPFA peer Local Authorities, 2015/16 (Q1&Q2)**



**Figure 9 Proportion of babies who had a 12 month review by Health Visitors, Buckinghamshire and CIPFA Peer Local Authorities, 2015/16 (Q1&Q2)**



**Figure 10 Proportion of babies who had a 2 to 2½ year review by Health Visitors, Buckinghamshire and CIPFA Peer Local Authorities, 2015/16 (Q1&Q2)**



### *6.9.7 Demand*

The early years foundation stage (EYFS) sets standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to 5 years old. All schools and Ofsted-registered Early Years providers must follow the EYFS, including childminders, preschools, nurseries and school reception classes.

The EYFS profile is a key measure of early years development across a wide range of developmental areas. Children from poorer backgrounds are more at risk of poorer development and the evidence shows that differences by social background emerge early in life. If this is not addressed, this inequality will have adverse consequences throughout the school years and beyond.

### *6.9.8 Horizon scanning*

The responsibility for commissioning children's public health services including Health Visitors and School Nursing has transferred from NHS England to Local Authorities. This provides an opportunity for improved coordination and a partnership approach with all early years' providers and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations to promote the best possible development at this critical time in children's lives and to address the inequalities experienced by more disadvantaged groups.

### *6.9.9 Conclusions*

The early years between birth and the age of 5 are a critical time when the foundations are laid which affect a child's potential, development and achievement throughout the rest of their life. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) profile provides individual information about each child's development and readiness for school at the end of reception year, which can also be collated to provide a picture of child development in a local area and nationally.

The proportion of children in Buckinghamshire achieving a good level of development has increased in the last three years, in line with the trend seen in England and the South East. In Buckinghamshire in 2014/15 it was significantly higher than the England average, but significantly lower than the South East average, and third highest among its CIPFA Local Authority peer group. EYFS profile scores are better among girls than boys, although the gender gap in Buckinghamshire narrowed somewhat in 2014/15.

There is clear evidence that children from more deprived areas are less likely to be assessed as having a good level of development by the age of 5. The gap between all children and children who are eligible for free school meals has decreased in Buckinghamshire but is still much wider in Buckinghamshire than on average in the South East or England. The proportion of children achieving a good level of

development in the EYFS profile was also significantly lower in the most deprived quintile of the Buckinghamshire population than in the other 4 quintiles, and was 35% lower than in the least deprived quintile. Wycombe District had a significantly lower proportion of children achieving a good level of development compared to the Buckinghamshire average and all other three Districts.

New metrics have been developed nationally to collect data on the number of babies having developmental checks by Health Visitors. In Buckinghamshire, the first six months (2015/16) data shows that the proportion of babies having new birth visits and 6-8 week checks were significantly higher than the national averages. However, the proportion having checks at 1 year and 2 to 2½ years were significantly lower than the England averages and among the lowest in the CIPFA comparator group.

In summary, while the overall picture in Buckinghamshire is of good levels of Early Years development, there are significant inequalities, with fewer children in more disadvantaged areas achieving a good level of development by the age of 5. This gap between the most disadvantaged children and other children appears to be greater in Buckinghamshire than in many other areas.

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June 2016

April Brett  
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June 2016

## *References*

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<sup>1</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2)

<sup>2</sup> Those eligible for free school meals <http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/education/schools/free-school-meals/>