

## Press Release

### **Closing the gap in education performance**

Improvements in GCSEs across Serco contracts almost double national rate of improvement

**4<sup>th</sup> February 2010**

Last month's finalised national GCSE results confirm that improvements across education services run by Serco on behalf of councils are consistently outpacing national improvements. Over the past 4 years since the benchmark of 5 GCSEs including English and maths was introduced, improvements made at Bradford and Walsall have been at almost twice the rate of national improvement. At Stoke-upon-Trent, where Serco has managed children's services for the past three years, improvements have again significantly outperformed national improvements.

Serco was originally introduced into each of these councils to improve education services and bring them closer to national performance. Since Serco was introduced into Bradford and Walsall the gap against national performance across GCSEs has approximately halved when using the previous benchmark of 5 GCSEs excluding English and maths.

New management, improved relationships with schools, empowered and motivated staff, shorter decision-making chains, more efficient processes and effective use of technology are just some of the reasons for the accelerated improvements over the period.

Schools across the Bradford district are particularly pleased this year following record level results at GCSE for 5 A\*-C grades including English and maths. At 41.6%, this represents an impressive 4.7 percentage points rise on last year's results.

Walsall schools were also delighted with this year's equivalent results, which at 44%, continue the year on year trend of outstripping national improvements, narrowing the gap from 10.5 percentage points in 2006 to 5.8 percentage points this year.

Stoke-on-Trent pupils made consistent improvements since Serco were brought in to work with the council. Whilst performance for GCSEs including English and maths were reported at just

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below 40%, the rate excluding English and maths (the national benchmark prior to 2005/6) at 68.2% is less than 2 percentage points below the national average.

Elaine Simpson, MD of Serco's Education and Children's Services business commented, "Firstly, well done to all the pupils, their families and teachers in these particular geographies – these results are a testament to their hard work. I would however like to congratulate the staff that work either for Serco, for the partner local authorities, or other partner agencies who are committed to creating a better future for the children they serve. We are delighted that we have been able to play our part in improving exam achievements and will continue to bring our values, skills and resources into delivering better children's services. "

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### 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. The following table shows the confirmed 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	<i>4 year percentage point improvements</i>
Bradford	34	36.3	36.9	41.6	7.6
Stoke-on-Trent	Before Serco	35	37.1	39.1	<i>(4.1 in 3 years Serco involvement)</i>
Walsall	34.9	36.2	40.9	44	9.1
National	45.6	46.7	47.6	49.8	4.2

3. 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). Source: ONS/DCSF

	2001/2		2008/9	
	%	National Gap	%	National Gap

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Bradford	34.3	(15.7)	63.7	(6.3)
Walsall	40.6	(9.4)	65	(5)
ational	50		70	

**(End)**

### **For further information please contact**

Mark Vaughan, Strategic Marketing & Communications Manager,

Education & Children's Services :

T +44 (0) 7834 801 415

### **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.

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### **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](http://www.serco.com).