

The Strategic Use of Education Data January 2018

Local Authorities in 2018

John Freeman CBE

NCER Chair



The statutory framework

Education Act 1996 Section 13A:

Duty to promote high standards in primary and secondary education.

(1) A local education authority shall ensure that their functions relating to the provision of education to which this section applies are (so far as they are capable of being so exercised) exercised by the authority with a view to promoting high standards.



The statutory framework

Education Act 1996 Section 13A:

Duty to promote high standards in primary and secondary education.

This duty, and others, have remained in place since the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Academies Act 2010 changed the framework but did not repeal any duties on local authorities.



The statutory framework

Education Act 1996 Section 13A:

Duty to promote high standards in primary and secondary education.

If the government were to repeal this and other general duties that apply universally, to every child, they would have to find another agency to take on the duty. Neither academies nor the DfE would want to take on such a general duty.



The statutory framework

The Section 13A duty does not give local authorities intervention powers in academies, but rather a quality assurance duty. It remains as a power of local authorities to offer services to academies.



The statutory framework

Ofsted inspected the education functions of local authorities during the previous parliament, both in respect of quality and other functions including SEND and admissions.



The statutory framework

There is recent case law that local authorities are responsible for the education of all children residing in their area – in 2017 Essex County Council were found to be at fault with regard to SEND and home education.



The statutory framework

Regional Schools Commissioners were not set up under legislation but are civil servants working with delegated powers from the Secretary of State.



The statutory framework

Sub-Regional Improvement Boards have been set up to: make recommendations for the Strategic School Improvement Fund; support the monitoring of the impact of funded proposals; use the combined expertise of the education system; support discussion of wider DfE initiatives



NCER support for LAs and DCSs

Local authorities have richer and more sophisticated data analyses available to them through NCER – for schools and academies, at pupil and institutional level – than either Regional Schools Commissioners and Ofsted. Local authorities have the evidence to challenge MATs, academies and RSCs as well as maintained schools.



NCER support for LAs and DCSs

For example, using NCER tools a local authority can assess how well a school or academy is performing in working with boys on FSM6 with low prior attainment to achieve, as compared with the local authority as a whole or nationally.



NCER and Regional Support

NCER has mostly operated at local authority and national level. Increasingly work is being supported through RIAs at regional level, with LGA, ADCS and Solace supporting regional peer support and challenge.

NCER wants to support regional working, but ...



NCER products

NCER provides extensive and powerful analytical tools for local authorities at individual, school, local authority and national levels – but NCER does not decide which reports and analyses are needed locally – that is a matter for each local authority.



NCER

NCER directors, and the NCER local authority community, are passionate about the use of education data by local authorities to improve educational outcomes.

NCER works only for local authorities, not the DfE, and not MATs.



A reflection on education data

NCER can only use the quantitative education data that are available – and those data can be very powerful, especially when appropriate comparisons are made. But ...



A reflection on education data

All data need to be considered carefully,
not just accepted.

The phonics screening assessment is a
good example:



A reflection on education data

Phonics Screening – Year 1

2012

2013

2014

2015

2016

2017



A reflection on education data

Phonics Screening – Year 1

2012	58%
2013	69%
2014	74%
2015	77%
2016	81%
2017	81%



A reflection on education data

Predicted in 2011 ...

Phonics Screening – Year 1

2012	58%	50%
2013	69%	60%
2014	74%	68%
2015	77%	74%
2016	81%	78%
2017	81%	80%



A reflection on education data Phonics Screening – Year 1

So there was a predictable trend ... but that doesn't mean that comparisons are not useful:



A reflection on education data Phonics Screening – Year 1

So there was a predictable trend ... but that doesn't mean that comparisons are not useful:

Boys / girls FSM6/nonFSM6

EAL/nonEAL School/school School/LA

But all results need to be interpreted.

A final reflection on education data

All education data analyses need to be read very carefully as (“Lies, damned lies and statistics!”) they may all tell the truth, but to get at the underlying meaning needs professional assessment.



A final reflection on education data

All education data analyses need to be read very carefully as (“Lies, damned lies and statistics!”) they may all tell the truth, but to get at the underlying meaning needs professional interpretation.

***NCER provides the analytical tools;
local authorities provide the
professional
interpretation.***



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