Southwark Virtual School Annual Headteacher's Report

Academic year 2022-2023

Contents

Preface

1. Summer 2022 saw a return to pre-pandemic grading this summer in England with protection in place for students.

2. It is most meaningful to compare results to 2019, the last summer exam series before the pandemic.

3. Exam boards have set grade boundaries this summer based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative evidence. As in previous years when exams took place, there has been an important role for examiner judgement in reviewing the quality of students' work.

4. Grade boundaries typically change each exam series to reflect any differences in the difficulty of the assessments. This means that some grade boundaries are lower than 2019, while others are higher. The approach to grading this summer has protection built into the grading process so, irrespective of the grade boundaries, students can be confident that the disruption they have faced has been taken into account.

<p align="right">Guide to GCSE results for England, summer 2023 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>

Introduction

5. This report is based on Local Authority held pupil information and results from schools for the academic year 2022-2023. The data in this report is constantly updated from first issue until all national data becomes available.

6. The details contained in this report presents an overview of the activities and impact of Southwark Virtual School to advocate for the Local Authority`s looked-after children to ensure high aspirations and the best possible outcomes for each young person.

7. The report identifies areas of future development to achieve improved outcomes for Southwark's looked after children. We want all looked after children to achieve the best they can and promote success into adulthood, whatever age they came into our care.

8. The report highlights the multidisciplinary nature of the work – we are supported by the Education and Social Care directorates, our looked after children, carers, parents, school leadership groups, Social Care colleagues and other professionals. We plan with a view to achieve clear academic and vocational pathways into education, employment and training. We aim to minimise disruptions along the way.

Virtual Schools

9. Virtual schools were established by the Children and Families Act 2014. This placed a statutory responsibility on local authorities in England to appoint a Virtual School Head Teacher (VSH) to take on the role of championing the education of all children looked after by the council.

10. Virtual schools support education outcomes for looked after children through educational interventions, but also by addressing broader issues that might impact on their attainment such as the psychological factors of attachment, relationships, and mental health.

11. More recently the government has moved to expand the remit of the virtual school beyond looked after children to the additional cohort of children with a social worker.
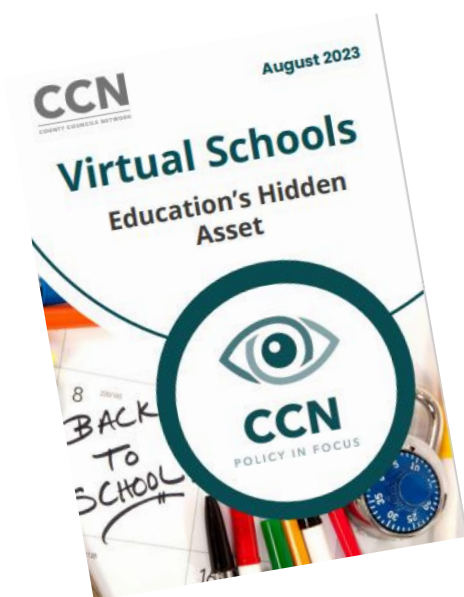
[County Councils Network Policy In focus - August 2023](#)

TYPICAL FUNCTIONS OF A VIRTUAL SCHOOL

Supporting care experienced children and young people to access and achieve in education and training

Promoting care experienced children and young peoples' need to access high quality support, which meets their needs in a timely way

Working closely with all those involved in providing education to ensure they understand the issues and challenges facing our children and young people

Working to reduce the challenges resulting from changes of care placement or school
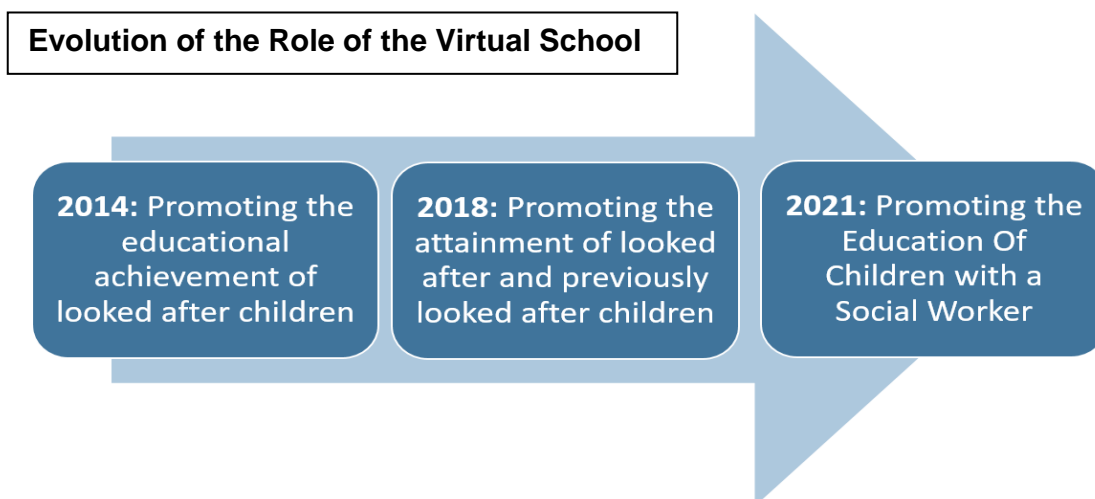
Challenging barriers to engagement and good attendance

Promoting equality and equity

A Changing Education Landscape

12. **The Extension of the Role of the Virtual School Head was extended to include all children who have or have had a social worker** including children in need (CIN), and those subject to child protection plans (CPP).

Evolution of the Role of the Virtual School

2014: Promoting the educational achievement of looked after children

2018: Promoting the attainment of looked after and previously looked after children

2021: Promoting the Education Of Children with a Social Worker

13. **16-18 year old children looked after and Care Leavers extension of the pupil premium plus (PP+) funding**. From October 2021, Post 16 PP+ grant is in place to promote achievement for those in all levels of Education at KS5 from Entry through to A' level. The purpose of the grant is to provide support for expenditure incurred in respect of implementing the role of Virtual School Head for post-16 looked-after children and Care Leavers.

14. **Research of Virtual School outcomes**:
   The Rees Centre at Oxford University was commissioned to undertake an evaluation of the first six months of the VSH role extension and the PP+ post-16 pilot and set out their key findings in a research report published in December 2022   Evaluation of the virtual school heads extension and the pupil premium plus post-16 pilot - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

15. **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) updated for 2023**
   The DfE has updated KCSIE – the changes come into force on 1 September 2023. The most notable change this year is the emphasis on your school's approach and processes regarding online filtering and monitoring.

16. **Ofsted's inspection handbook updated for 2023**
   The changes come into force on 1 September 2023.
   There are a number of changes this year, including:
   - More detail on what it means to have a 'culture of safeguarding'
   - A new section on Ofsted's 'conduct during inspection'
   - A new section on how Ofsted inspects attendance as part of 'behaviour and attitudes'
   - A broader definition of 'off-rolling'

   It also embeds changes we were expecting as part of reforms announced in June 2023:
   - More detail on what 'ineffective safeguarding' looks like
   - Clarity that you can share provisional outcomes with whoever you deem appropriate
   - More detail on when you're next likely to be inspected

17. **Suspensions and exclusions guidance for 2023**

The changes come into force on 1 September 2023 for new cases arising from that point onwards. Changes include:

- Allowing remote access to governing board meetings and independent review panels (IRPs)
  - ➢ Parent/carers can request that a meeting be held remotely
- Tightened rules around cancelling suspensions/exclusions
  - ➢ This includes that headteachers can now cancel exclusions that have not started yet, previously they could only cancel suspensions/exclusions that had already begun
- Clarity on timelines for the board to meet to consider representations
  - ➢ This is for pupils who have received a suspension for 15.5 days in a term.

18. **EYFS framework updated for 2023**

This applies from 4 September 2023.

There are 2 small changes and 1 clarification:

- Minimum staff-to-child ratio for 2-year-olds is now 1:5 (rather than 1:4)
- Childminders can now care for more than the specified maximum of 3 young children
- Clarification that 'adequate supervision' while children are eating means children must be within sight and hearing of an adult.

19. **The white paper: upcoming changes**

While the Schools Bill (which would have introduced several aims from the white paper into legislation) has been scrapped, the white paper is still going ahead.

Notable upcoming changes include:

- You are expected to provide a 32.5-hour school week by September 2024 (your school might be meeting this already). The initial deadline was going to be September 2023, but it's been extended
- All schools will be inspected by September 2025
- The DfE is **not** enforcing the 2030 target for all schools to move into academy trusts, and there are currently no plans to do so in the future

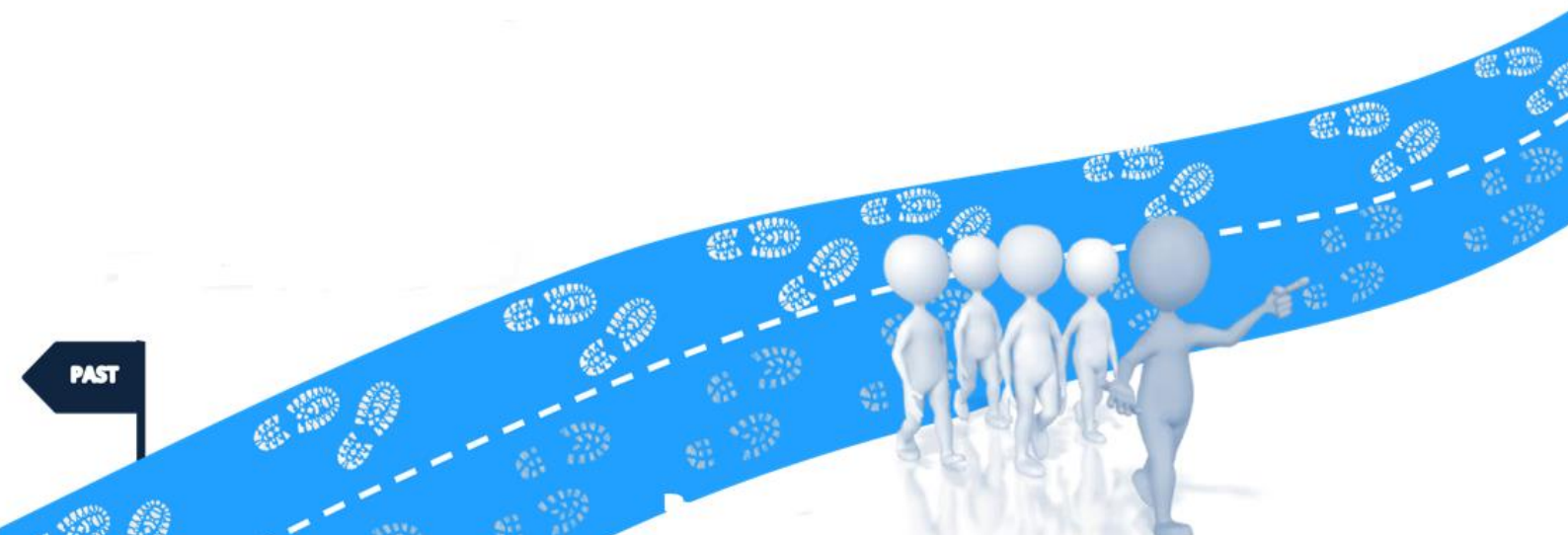20. **Other changes on the horizon**

We are anticipating further updates during this 2023/24 academic year to the:

- School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD)
- Governance Handbook

21. **Delayed guidance**:

We were expecting guidance from the DfE on policies for transgender pupils. This guidance is currently delayed, and there has been no updated deadline.

PAST

Southwark's Children in Care Population

22. The data represents the current picture of Southwark CLA statutory school age cohort. Southwark's Children in Care population is constantly changing as children move in and out of the Care System.

REPORTED GENDER
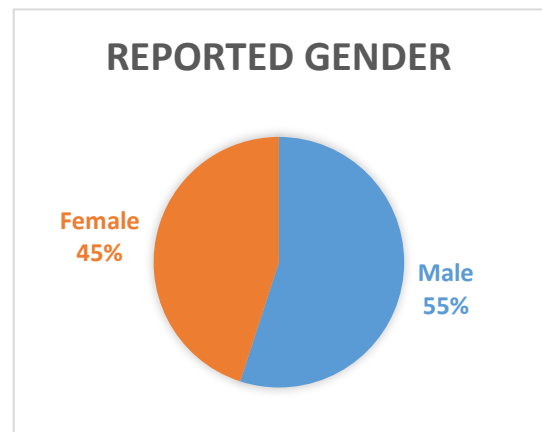
Female 45%
Male 55%

Table 1: Reported Gender – Statutory School Age					
	Total CLA	Male	%	Female	%
Year R	8	4	1%	4	1%
Year 1	9	5	2%	4	1%
Year 2	8	6	2%	2	1%
Year 3	2	0	0%	2	1%
Year 4	10	2	1%	8	3%
Year 5	16	7	3%	9	3%
Year 6	11	7	3%	4	1%
Year 7	22	14	5%	8	3%
Year 8	30	11	4%	19	7%
Year 9	37	26	10%	11	4%
Year 10	56	35	13%	21	8%
Year 11	58	31	12%	27	10%
Total	267	148	55%	119	45%

23. At the end of the 2022-2023 academic year Southwark Virtual School recorded 384 students on roll. 267 children are statutory school age and 117 in Key Stage 5. Recorded 162 females 222 males.

24. Of the statutory school age cohort, it is reported that boys remain a larger proportion of the Southwark looked after cohort. Locally 55, nationally 56%.

25. 76% (203 children) of Southwark statutory school age CLA are in Secondary education, which is unchanged from last year's cohort data.

24% 76%
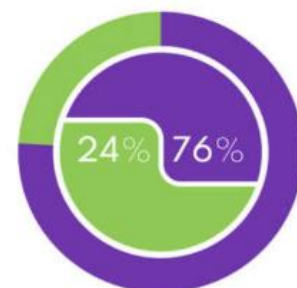
Southwark's Children in Care with SEN

26. Nationally, the number of All pupils with special educational needs (SEN) increased to 1.57 million pupils in 2023, representing 17.3% of all pupils. This is an increase from last year when figures were 1.49 million pupils, representing 16.5% of all pupils.

    The proportion of All pupils with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) increased to 4.3% in 2023. Pupils with an EHC plan made up 25% of all pupils with SEN in January 2023.

    The number of All pupils with an EHC plan has increased by 9% between 2022 and 2023, and by a total of 64% since 2016.

    Special educational needs publication June 2023 (publishing.service.gov.uk)

27. In Southwark, the proportion of Southwark's statutory school age looked after children
    - with **special educational needs** is **41% (112)** compared to 12.6% nationally.
    - with an **EHCP** is 31**% (84)** compared to 4% nationally

    Special educational needs in England, Explore education statistics GOV.UK
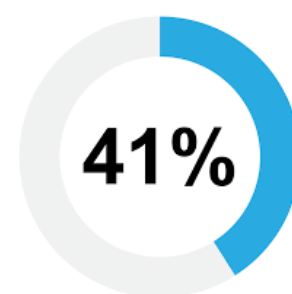
28. The proportion of Southwark's statutory school age looked after children with SEN is listed below by year group.

Table 2: Special Education Needs			
Year Group	Total CLA	EHCP	SEN Support
Yr R	8	1	0
Yr 1	9	1	0
Yr 2	8	1	2
Yr 3	2	0	0
Yr 4	10	2	0
Yr 5	16	3	2
Yr 6	11	3	0
Yr 7	22	10	3
Yr 8	30	16	1
Yr 9	37	12	6
Yr 10	56	14	9
Yr 11	58	21	5
Total	267	84 (31%)	28 (10%)

Geographic Spread

29. 64% of children looked after are placed outside of Southwark. The table below shows this distribution by year group.

Table 3: In and Out of Borough by Year Group		
Year Group	In Borough	Out Borough
Year R to Year 5	26	27
Year 6	5	6
Year 7	6	16
Year 8	13	17
Year 9	9	28
Year 10	20	36
Year 11	18	40
Total	97	170

Southwark's Children in Care by Ethnicity

30. The ethnicity of Southwark's Children looked after cohort, while in contrast to the national cohort, remains more or less in line with our statistical neighbours and reflects similarities of the demographics of Southwark's resident population and of Inner-City London.

31. Nationally, Children of White ethnicity account for 75% of children, 10% were Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups, 7% Black, African, Caribbean or Black British, 4% were Asian or Asian British, 3% other ethnicities and ethnicity was not known or not yet recorded for 1% Children looked after in England including adoptions, Explore education statistics GOV.UK

Table 4: Southwark's Cohort Breakdown by Ethnicity		
Ethnicity	Number	%
Asian/Asian British/Any other Asian Background	7	3%
Asian/Asian British/Bangladeshi	1	0%
Asian/Asian British/Indian	1	0%
Asian/Asian British/Pakistani	1	0%
Black/Black British	1	0%
Black/Black British/African	69	26%
Black/Black British/Any other Black background	22	8%
Black/Black British/Caribbean	24	9%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups/Any other Mixed background	25	9%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups/White and Asian	1	0%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups/White and Black African	7	3%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups/White and Black Caribbean	27	10%
Not disclosed	1	0%
Not Stated/Information not yet obtained - not refused	2	1%
Other Ethnic Groups/Any other ethnic group	12	4%
White/Any other White Background	7	3%
White/British	58	22%
White/Irish	1	0%

Inspection of Southwark Local Authority Children's Services

32. Southwark Children's Services were inspected by Ofsted between 26 and 30 September 2022. The Inspection found that children who need help, protection and care continue to receive good services and have their lives improved by frontline staff, leaders and managers working effectively to safeguard and support them.

They have a tangible and positive impact on the services and are impressive champions for children. They know their children well and they make a difference.

50198438 (ofsted.gov.uk)

33. The published report included a good judgment on the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers. The key findings for children in care included:
    - Permanency planning is understood well and for most children long-term plans are secured quickly
    - Children's care plans are strong, reflecting their needs accurately.
    - Foster carers receive good-quality training and development opportunities that help them meet the needs of the children they care for.
    - Children in care have a strong voice and influence within the local authority.
    - Foster carers receive good-quality training and development opportunities that help them meet the needs of the children they care for.

34. Specifically in relation to Virtual School outcomes the report found that:
    - The Virtual School and partners work well together to ensure that children in care receive the educational support they need to succeed. Individual children are making strong academic progress.
    - Older children are being helped and supported into higher education, training and employment opportunities, as appropriate to their needs.
    - Children's personal education plans capture their experiences, as well as evaluating their educational progress and personal development.
    - Senior managers and staff have ensured that children and young people continue to be safeguarded.
    - The best possible decisions are being made about children's care and education.

35. The report also identified the need for the Virtual School to continue to strengthen work on the small group of young people who are persistently absence to ensure they access education on a regular basis. This has remained a key priority for the virtual school and social care and we continue to work in partnership to drive forward improvement in this area with targeted casework, data analysis, early intervention and regular multi-agency panels to agree priority actions.

Ofsted Ratings of Schools in which we place Southwark's looked after children

36. Southwark Virtual School strives to ensure that looked after children are placed in schools that are good or outstanding.

37. Children in schools rated as "Outstanding" are half as likely to experience a mid-year school move compared to children in schools rated "Inadequate". Children only attend 'Requires Improvement' schools in exceptional circumstances, for example when a previously Good school has a poor inspection outcome but it is considered in best interests of the child for them to remain there.

38. The distribution of Southwark looked after children by Ofsted ratings of the education provision they attend is listed below. 3% (8 children) attend provision that is in requires improvement which is down from 5% last year.

Outstanding 56 / 21%

Good - 138 / 52%

Requires improvement 8 / 3%

Inadequate 0

No Grade 65 / 24%
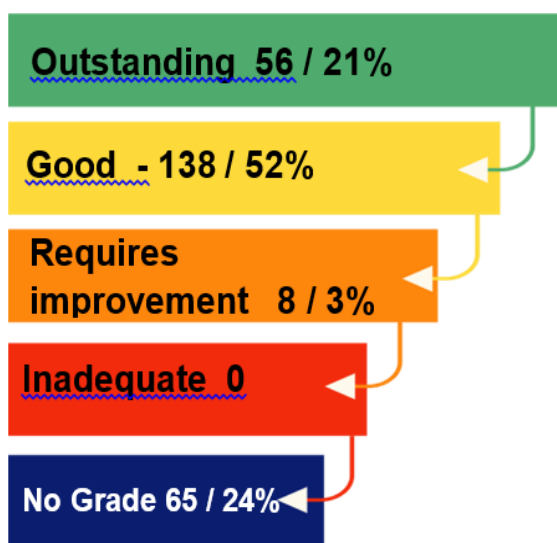
Children in Requires Improvement Provision

- 1 child was in a good school that moved to requires improvement after an Ofsted inspection.
- 4 children were attending Requires Improvement Provisions prior to coming into Care.
- 1 child with an EHCP was placed after SEN consultation deemed as the only school that could meet the Special Education Needs.
- 1 child was placed by admissions.
- 1 child was placed due to proximity to placement and ESOL package offered.

39. Some children are attending schools that do not have an Ofsted outcome – these are either academy converters not yet inspected since conversion or new schools.

Attendance

Please see Appendix 1 for Attendance, CME and Suspension and Exclusion report.

40. Being in school is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing, and wider development. Evidence shows that the students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A level results.

41. Research found that pupils who performed better both at the end of primary and secondary school missed fewer days than those who didn't perform as well.

<div align="right">

The link between absence and attainment at KS2 and KS4, GOV.UK

</div>

> *'…even before the pandemic, there is a group of children who struggle to attend school regularly and who have fallen through the gaps in our education system. Coming out of the pandemic, this group has only gotten bigger...'*

<div align="right">

Rachel De Souza Children's Commissioner - *Voices of England's Missing Children*

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42. Being in school is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing, and wider development. Evidence shows that the students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A level results.

90%
Persistent Absenteeism
When pupils record less than a 90% attendance at school.

50%
Severe   Absenteeism
When pupils are present for less than 50% of their school days.

Children Missing Education

Please see Appendix 1 for Attendance, CME and Suspension and Exclusion report.

Definition of Children Missing Education

> *"Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life."*

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Children Missing Education, Statutory guidance for local authorities
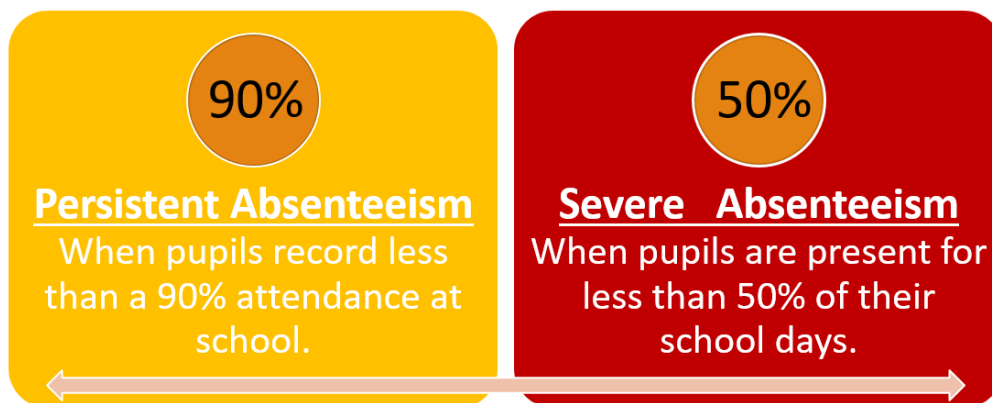
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43. Southwark Virtual School strives to ensure that looked after children are in education. Schools are the safest place for children to be and through partnership work with key professionals, instances where children are out of education are addressed swiftly to ensure that education placements are secured without delay.

44. Southwark Virtual School applies the term Children Missing Education to all children with no school place even when they are receiving tuition. There is also a strong focus on children who are reported as risk of CME.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

45. An unaccompanied asylum-seeking child (UASC) is an individual under 18, who has applied for asylum in his/her own right, is separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who by law or custom has responsibility to do so.

46. The number of Southwark looked after children who were unaccompanied asylum-seeking children has increased this academic year.

Table 5: Number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children						
2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
41	53	51	44	53	49	54

47. An increase in the numbers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children aged 16 years and over in Southwark is above national trends.   92% of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are aged 16+.

48. All Unaccompanied Minors receive a Personal Education Plan within 10 working days of coming into Care. During these meetings, education history and achievements are recorded, alongside interests, strengths and home location. Any barriers to learning are also noted including potential additional support.

49. The Virtual School take into account levels of spoken English and pastoral care needs alongside daily travelling distance to a local college. This information gathering informs decision making around sourcing suitable education provision.

ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

50. ESOL is delivered in most FE Colleges in London.

51. **Challenges** – The intake of Unaccompanied Minors has increased across London LA's. This has put a strain on FE College resources due to high demand for spaces. The additional challenge presented has been that of age dispute and discrepancies between home office and Southwark data. Some colleges have been reluctant to admit those whose age or identity are disputed.

52. **Successes –** The Southwark Virtual School through regular consultation with main providers have been instrumental in influencing decisions to increase ESOL capacity in FE Colleges. The result being that in most cases we are able to place new Unaccompanied Minors in education within 14 days of completing a PEP.

53. Follow up/review PEPs have documented positive feedback from teaching staff and evidenced that the majority of our ESOL students are keen to learn and do not present challenging behaviour.

Pupil Premium Plus

54. The Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) is grant funding from the DfE (Department for Education) to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and to close the gap with their peers.

55. Funding rates for the pupil premium in the <u>financial year 2022 to 2023</u> will increase in line with the latest inflation forecasts. Rates for 2022 to 2023 will be:
   - Looked-after children: £2,530.
   - Children who have ceased to be looked-after: £2,530.

56. Over the past academic year, Southwark Virtual School was able to target more specialist resources to ensure that educational needs were met.

57. Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) was devolved to schools to ensure that schools have the right resources to meet pupils' needs. This included purchasing laptops and increasing the tuition offer for online learning.

58. The Virtual School traditionally utilises retained funding for the following:

Table 6: Use of Retained Pupil Premium Plus Funding		
Provision	Description	Outcome
Fixed Term resourcing	**Academic attainment and personalised Education Support**: Funds 6 Specialist Education Advisors, 1 Project Officer and 1 Information Advice and Guidance officer.	Targeted support through individual personalised support and a stable adult tracking through education phases. Attendance at all PEPs and high-level advocacy work during change of Care placements, New to care and advocacy for school placement and provision stability.
SpeakerBox – Child's rights Officer and funding of 4 events each year.	Enhance the offer of the Child's right officers to support engagement of care leavers.	Preparation for adulthood. Promoting independent living skills. Support and guidance in entering the workplace.
Summer tuition programme	**Academic attainment** Successful summer school over the school holidays. With over 30 children (stat school age and KS5) who took up the opportunity to access additional tuition over the summer.	Between them, they accessed **400 hours of tuition** funded from the Virtual School COVID recovery Grant and Pupil Premium funding.
Complimentary Exam support over Pupil Premium Plus payments to schools	**Academic attainment:** Offered to all looked after children taling exams through offer of 20-30 hours of additional tuition.	To raise attainment in subjects in which exams are about to be taken. To build confidence.
Supplementary Home Tuition	**Academic attainment:** for pupils in full time education with a focus on English and maths to support academic achievement.	Improved attainment in subjects that are identified at PEP meetings.

		Improved summative assessment/ exam results. Building confidence and competence in academic subjects.
Interim Alternative Provision:	**Academic attainment:** Full time home tuition offer for children who are between care placements, persistent absentees (school refusers) and other circumstances where this support is needed.	To ensure that there are no gaps in education through episodes when school provision is not in place. Improved attainment in subjects that are identified at PEP meetings. Improved summative assessment/ exam results. Building confidence and competence in academic subjects.
Digital resource and Online learning programme Laptop Provision	**Academic attainment:** Purchase of laptop and other technology to assist learning and access to online learning. To ensure education is accessible to children who may be in remote areas.	To support lost learning through gaps in education – part funded from Covid recovery grants. To secure swift access to education for pupils without a school place due to care placement changes and those pupils who are placed in remote areas of the country where 1:1 tuition cannot be reserved.
Letterbox Literacy	**Academic attainment:** Colourful education related packages posted to children through Royal mail delivered to children are equipped with reading and writing material as well as stationery.	Targeted resources for primary aged pupils. Reading material and stationary to support learning and to promote engagement.
Storytime	**Academic attainment:** Storytime is a story magazine and social enterprise. Children receive in the post - Storytime supplies magazines to our primary-aged looked after children.	Targeted resources for primary aged pupils. Reading material and stationary to support learning and to promote engagement. Supporting families and reluctant readers with accessible reading material.
Education Psychologist	**Targeted therapeutic support** - 36 Days Of Educational Psychology expertise is bought annually with intention for this to increase.	Support dedicated to the Virtual School to support learning difficulties and early identification of statutory assessments.
Speech and Language Therapy Service	**Targeted therapeutic support** - 20 Days Of Speech and language therapy expertise is bought annually with intention for this to increase.	Support dedicated to the Virtual School to support learning difficulties and early identification of statutory assessments.
Power2 Power2 Rediscover Teens and Toddlers	**Targeted therapeutic Support and attainment:** Support looked after children and children in need through the Teens and Toddlers programme and Power2 Rediscover programme. Students complete the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale to track improvements in their wellbeing.	This is a programme to build resilience and community. A programme for children and young people aged 12-17 struggling with their confidence, self-esteem, exhibiting distressed behaviour, disengaged from school and learning, and who may also be at risk of school exclusion.

Virtual School APP	Targeted spend Southwark Virtual School bespoke mobile application to access curriculum related content for children and Continuous professional development opportunities for professional.	Subject enrichment, enhanced academic support. Access to learning resources.
Student connection/ outreach	KS5 Higher Education and Apprenticeship workshops.	Greater connectivity with cohort. Student access to important information relating to their learning and futures.
Information Advice and Guidance: Student connection/ Outreach	Trauma informed training aimed at Designated Teachers and teaching staff.	Providing vital information to Professionals, teaching staff and students so they make informed decisions about their future.
Training in Schools and Colleges Bespoke Continuous Professional development opportunities offered	**Academic attainment and Targeted therapeutic support**: This is funding that exceeds the traditional Pupil premium offer and based on the principle of needs based funding, children who require additional funding can access exceptional needs funding.	Providing Designated Teachers, School leaders and school staff with context and insight into the potential complexities of looked after children. Provision of strategies to enhance student retention and achievement.
Exceptional needs funding	Additional funding over Pupil premium funding amounts allocated to children and schools.	To support children's attainment and social/mental health well- being by topping up allocations as required by schools

School feedback: Students' attendance has improved, and detentions are quite low with high achievement points. The programme supports students to show more confidence, talk more to year team about issues that are bothering them and more able to advocate for themselves in a respectful and productive manner.

Student feedback:
• I felt comfortable about saying anything without feeling judged, and that it's helped with my communication skills and confidence.
• The sessions really made me think about how important certain topics are.
• I liked it all I got to speak about my feelings.
• Being able to set goals for myself etc.
• I've realised a lot about myself.

Thank you!
SpeakerBox and the Children's Rights service would like to take this opportunity to thank the Virtual School for their contributions to the service. Their input has not only increased engagement and SpeakerBox membership, but it has also made in possible raise aspirations for some of our Children and Young People.
We thank you.

Supplementary and Interim Tuition - 2023

59. The table below shows how Pupil Premium Plus was used to supplement education for our 2023 cohort. This is apart from funding devolved to schools.

60. The Virtual School always places additional focus on all children taking examinations to give children every opportunity to do their best. Supporting children when they need this most has proven to be an excellent strategy yielding good results.

61. Full time Interim Alternative Provision was put in place in instances while children are awaiting a school place. Full time AP interim was offered to a significant higher group of children than represented in the table below but the costs for this was picked up by the SEN team as the children were on an EHCP.

Table 7: Tuition with no SEN			
Month	Number of pupils	Number of hours	Amount spent
September	3	112	£5,157.00
October	4	88	£4,923.00
November	12	259	£12,021.75
December	6	255	£11,464.50
January	25	982	£44,581.16
February	16	596	£26,868.00
March	91	3137	£141,698.98
April	15	342.5	£17,253.00
May	16	181.5	£13,976.00
June	16	192.88	£8,602.75
July	12	170.5	£7,832.00
August	3	37	£1,650.00
2022-23 YT	**219**	**6353.38**	**£296,028.14**

Table 8: Tuition with SEN			
Month	Number of pupils	Number of hours	Amount spent
September	1	20.5	£922.50
December	9	348	£15,744.00
January	5	136	£6,195.50
February	3	212	£9,558.00
March	50	1602	£72,088.00
April	1	37	£1,665.00
May	3	31.5	£1,436.50
June	7	144	£6,931.25
July	5	81	£3,636.00
2022-23 YT	**84**	**2612**	**£118,176.75**

Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

62. PEPs are a key driver in ensuring our pupils receive good quality education provision that is suited to their needs. PEPs are a holistic tool to improve attainment and engagement.

63. The Virtual School officially launched the bespoke Southwark Electronic PEP (EPEP) in the summer term of 2023. This represented the realisation of a long-held priority.

64. Training continues to be delivered regularly to Social Workers and Designated Teachers from schools and colleges to ensure that all professionals were comfortable in the use of this new tool.

65. The Personal Education Plan or PEP is a record of how professionals around the child looked after will support their educational outcomes and achievement. It is developed and reviewed termly with the designated teacher, young person, social worker, carer and Virtual School. A PEP should be started within 10 days of a child becoming looked after, and their plan must be in place by their first review. PEP documents include:
    - Strengths and achievements
    - Views of the student
    - SMART academic targets
    - Current and target attainment data

66. The completion figure at the end of the first EPEP window was 97%. Whilst the target remains 100% this represents a significant improvement and is testament to the accessibility of the EPEP as a working document.
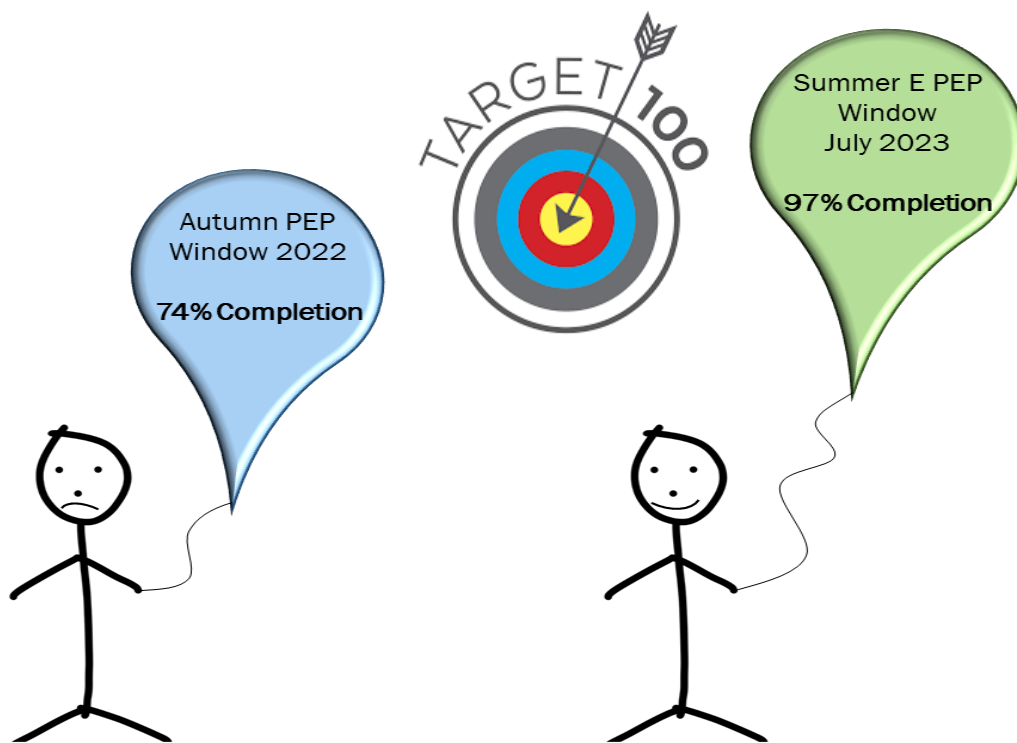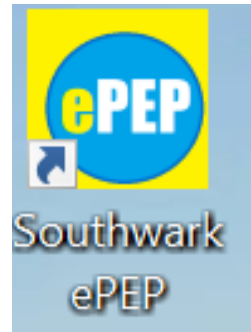
Virtual School – Staff Structure

67. The Virtual School in Southwark forms part of the Education Access and Statutory Services division in Children's and Adults' Services.

68. The structure of Southwark Virtual School provides a focus on specialist provision with targeted leadership of 2 Deputy Headteachers who oversee:
    - A Statutory school age phase team
    - A Post 16 Team

69. The Virtual School also has a business team who oversee all data, commissioning and finance operations of the Virtual School

70. Changes: Appointment of a Children with a Social Worker Co-ordinator to support the extended duties of the Virtual School Headteacher. Funded from CWSW grant.

VIRTUAL HEADTEACHER
Usha Singh

DEPUTY HEAD STAT SCHOOL	BUSINESS SUPPORT	CIN CORDINATOR	DEPUTY HEAD KS5
Janet Amara	**Business Team**	**Appointed**	**Adam Marling**

DEPUTY HEAD STAT SCHOOL	BUSINESS SUPPORT	DEPUTY HEAD KS5
EDUCATION ADVISOR — **Shyma Miah**	PROJECT OFFICER — **Claire Hamilton**	EDUCATION ADVISOR KS5 — **Lisa Hamilton**
EDUCATION ADVISOR — **Abida Umarji**	PROJECT OFFICER — **Ben Robinson**	EDUCATION ADVISOR KS5 — **Jessica Penketh**
EDUCATION ADVISOR — **Folade Adewale**	BUSINESS SUPPORT — **Tracy Buller**	EDUCATION ADVISOR KS5 — **Alice Beresford**
EDUCATION ADVISOR — **Vacant**		IAG OFFICER — **Blossom Garuba**
		E ADVISOR SEN — **Vacant**

In addition to this structure, part-time commissioned professionals support Southwark Virtual School

- **Educational Psychologists** – Dr Millie Owen and Dr Jacqui Noels(Southwark EP Services)
- **Speech and Language Therapy** – Katrina Bradford (Unlocking Language)

Key stage 4

71. Summer 2023 children resumed qualifications based on the usual grading standards set by the regulator Ofqual. This resulted in children preparing for the challenges of taking final exams. This has meant that, as expected GCSE results are lower this year compared to 2022. As the results show, overall grades are similar to those in 2019, before the pandemic started. To recognise the disruption students have faced, there was grading protection in place.

Southwark's 2022-2023 Year 11 Cohort Information

72. Southwark's 2022-2023 Year 11 cohort comprised 61 children
    - 43 children were in the 12 month plus - SSDA903 cohort
    - 18 children were in Care for 12 months or less.

73. 12 Months+ in Care - This definition has been used in statutory guidance because 12 months is considered an appropriate length of time to gauge the possible association of being looked after on educational attainment. Evidence suggests that children who are in Care for more than 12 months perform better than children new to Care.

Table 9: 22-23 Yr11 cohort		
Gender		
Male	33	54%
Female	28	46%
SEN/EHCP		
SEN Support	5	8%
EHCP	20	33%
Total SEN	25	41%
IN/OUT borough		
In borough	11	18%
Out of borough	50	82%

74. 54% of the cohort was male and 46% female. This is significantly different from the cohort last year at 71% and 29% respectively.

75. 41% of the cohort are recorded as having SEN. 33% with an EHCP and 8% SEN support.

76. 18% were educated in the borough compared to the last reported figure London 42% and 66% nationally.

Ethnicity

77. The Ethnicity of Southwark looked after children as recorded are listed below.

Table 10: Ethnicity Breakdown	Number	%
Asian/Asian British/Any other Asian Background	4	7%
Asian/Asian British/Pakistani	1	2%
Black/Black British/African	17	28%
Black/Black British/Any other Black background	5	8%
Black/Black British/Caribbean	6	10%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups/Any other Mixed background	4	7%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups/White and Black African	1	2%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups/White and Black Caribbean	5	8%
Other Ethnic Groups/Any other ethnic group	3	5%
White/Any other White Background	1	2%
White/British	14	23%

12 Month Plus Cohort

78. The 12 month Plus cohort of Southwark looked after children as recorded are listed below

Table 11: 2022-2023 Year 11 - 12 Month Plus Cohort		
Gender		
Male	24	56% (46% last year)
Female	19	44% (54% last year)
SEN/EHCP		
SEN Support	5	12%
EHCP	19	44%
Total SEN	24	56%

79. The 12 months+ in Care cohort reflects the male /female breakdown and the SEN figures of the wider Looked after group. Those with an EHCP rise to 44%.

Table 12: IN/OUT borough		
In borough	09	21%
Out of borough	34	79%

80. 21% of students were educated in the borough, which is similar to the 2021-22 figures.

Attainment information

81. The data below offer a summary of attainment for Southwark Virtual School looked after children (CLA) cohort as well our looked after children who are 12 months or more in care. A direct comparison should not be made with the Covid years as those results are based on Teacher assessed grades.

12 Month plus Cohort – 43 Students

82. Southwark's 2022 CLA cohort achieving a pass (9-4) and a strong pass (9-5) in both English and Maths - for our 12 months plus is plotted in the table below.

83. Outcomes for Maths echo exactly the 2019 pre Covid outcomes whilst the English results are considerably higher than the 2019 pre Covid figures.

84. Southwark's 2023 CLA English and Maths results for our 12 months plus cohort is plotted against the outcome from previous years in the table below.

Table 13: English and Maths - 12 Month plus Cohort					
Level	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
English Standard, 9-4	24%	26%	34%	34%	30%
English Strong, 9-5	15%	17%	20%	22%	21%
Maths Standard, 9-4	21%	34%	34%	22%	21%
Maths Strong, 9-5	9%	11%	24%	20%	9%

85. Achieving a pass in both English and Maths

Table 14: Achieving a pass in both English and Maths - 12 Month plus Cohort					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Standard, 9-4			34%	20%	19%
Strong, 9-5	6.5%	11%	17%	17%	9%

Attainment whole cohort: 61 students

86. Southwark's 2023 CLA English and Maths for the full cohort is plotted on the tables below.

Table 15: English and Maths				
	2020	2021	2022	2023
English Standard, 9-4	32%	27%	47%	28%
English Strong, 9-5	26%	16%	17%	20%
Maths Standard, 9-4	13%	27%	17%	20%
Maths Strong, 9-5	7%	20%	15%	8%

87. Southwark's 2023 CLA cohort achieving a pass (9-4) and a strong pass (9-5) in both English and Maths - for the full cohort is plotted in the table below.

Table 16: Achieving a pass in both English and Maths				
	2019	2020	2022	2023
Standard, 9-4		22%	14%	16%
Strong, 9-5	10%	15%	11%	8%

88. Southwark's 2023 CLA cohort achieving a Grade 1-9 in English and Maths - for the full cohort is plotted in the table below

Table 17: Achieved a Grade 1 - 9		
	Number of children	%
English	31	51%
Maths	31	51%

The Transition process from Yr 11 to 12

89. Successful transitions from KS4 to KS5 are the result of joined up working between Virtual School Key stage 4 Team, Key Stage 5 Team and Social Workers. These teams networks work together with children, foster carers and education providers to secure transition to KS5.

90. Throughout the academic year, the Virtual school in house Information, Advice and Guidance officer meets with children in year 11. Students are guided to understand the options available and receive a tailored Action Plan going into Key Stage 5.

91. Once children make informed decisions the teams in Education and Care support transition to this next phase.

92. Handover meetings are scheduled for the end of each academic year and detailed information is shared to ensure continuity of support as students enter a new phase in their education.

93. Transition arrangements ensure that our students are progressing to:
- an appropriate level of Education/training
- to study subjects that they have a genuine interest in.

94. Secondary phase Virtual School Education Advisors work together with the year 11 Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) officer to plan for life after GCSE. A contingency plan is put in place based on GCSE results.

95. Special consideration at this early stage is given to students with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) so that we can share detailed information with prospective colleges and the correct support is put in place.

96. The second group of particular interest is the A' level contingent. The Virtual School put early support plans in place so that these students can make the academic jump from level 2 education to level 3.
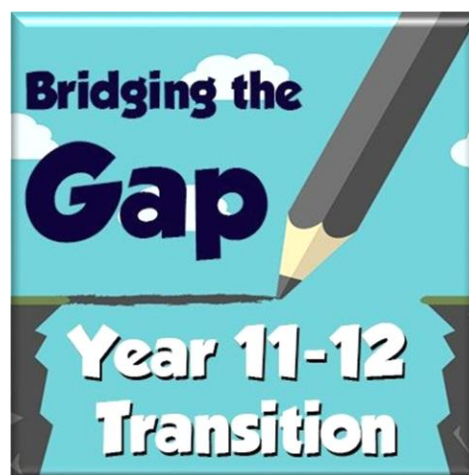
Year 11 Case Study

Case Study Year 11
Outcome: Success gaining GCSE grades despite placement change in Yr 11.

Child B
Child B is a 16 year student on a full care order since September 2013.

On transfer to secondary school, Child B aspired to achieve highly and was specially selected to be in the school's *Brilliant Club* for 'gifted and talented students. Despite being academically excellent, child B was coping with anxiety, low confidence and self-esteem. This student did not believe in their academic abilities and tended to become distressed before tests or exams. Whilst in Year 11, the placement was disrupted. A move to a temporary placement followed, but this did not prevent Child B from studying independently, attending school or accessing tuition provided by the Virtual School.
In the final exams, Child B achieved 5 GCSEs. The grades gained reflected the aspirational approach taken by the Virtual School and Care services: Maths-8, English Language 4, English Literature-4, Science 5-5.

Child B is in a good position to progress to study A' levels.

Destination of 2023 Year 11 Cohort

97. The table below offers the destination information of the 2023 Year 11 Cohort. Over 80% of children have a confirmed destination.

Table 18: Destinations				
	Gender	SEN	Borough	Year 11>12 Destination
1	Female		Southwark	Shooters Hill Sixth Form College
2	Male	SEN Support	Southwark	Christ The King, Emmanuel
3	Female		Barnet	NEET
4	Male		Lewisham	Lewisham College
5	Male	EHCP	Brent	Tuke School
6	Female		Croydon	Kingston College
7	Male	EHCP	Lewisham	Bromley College
8	Female	EHCP	Southwark	Lewisham College
9	Female		Southwark	Lambeth College
10	Male	EHCP	Medway	KITE College
11	Female	SEN Support	Southwark	Saint Francis Xavier Sixth Form College
12	Female	EHCP	Hackney	BOSCO College
13	Female		Leicester City	Loughborough Amherst School
14	Male	EHCP	West Berkshire	Priors Court School

15	Male	EHCP	Lewisham	NEET
16	Male		Kent	Chislehurst School for Girls
17	Female		Lambeth	LaRetrial, Bishop Thomas, A' Levels
18	Female	EHCP	South Holland	West Anglia College, Electrical
19	Female		Redbridge	NEET
20	Male		Croydon	John Ruskin College
21	Male	EHCP	Suffolk	Broadlands Hall
22	Female		Lewisham	Lewisham College
23	Male	EHCP	Bexley	NEET
24	Female		Hounslow	Richmond upon Thames College
25	Male		Redbridge	Dagenham College
26	Male		Southwark	Southwark College
27	Male		Croydon	John Ruskin College
28	Male		Lewisham	Southwark College
29	Male	EHCP	Merton	NEET
30	Female	SEN Support	Southwark	Westminster Kingsway College
31	Female	SEN Support	Lewisham	Christ The King, Emmanuel
32	Male		Lewisham	Lewisham College
33	Male	EHCP	Lambeth	Lambeth College
34	Male	EHCP	Hillingdon	NEET
35	Female		Southwark	BOSCO College
36	Male		Lewisham	Southwark College
37	Male		Croydon	Croydon College
38	Male		Southwark	City of Westminster College
39	Female		Lewisham	Lewisham College
40	Female		Southwark	NEET
41	Female	EHCP	Medway	Parkwood Hall Co-operative Academy
42	Male		Croydon	East Surrey College
43	Male		Southwark	Christ The King, Emmanuel
44	Male		Lambeth	City of Westminster College
45	Female	EHCP pending	Medway	Mid Kent College
46	Male		Redbridge	New City College
47	Female		Lewisham	Southwark College
48	Male		Croydon	Croydon College
49	Male	EHCP	Gravesham	Bemix Gravesham Kent
50	Male	EHCP	Buckinghamshire	NEET
51	Female		Croydon	City of London Academy Southwark
52	Male		1	Lewisham College
53	Female		Southwark	Lambeth College
54	Female		H'smith and Fulham	NEET
55	Male	SEN Support	Chelmsford	Chelmsford College
56	Female	EHCP	Croydon	London College of Beauty Therapy
57	Male			NEET
58	Female		Lambeth	London College of Beauty Therapy
59	Male	EHCP	Kent	KITE College
60	Female	EHCP	Maidstone	NEET
61	Female	SA Requested	N Northamptonshire	NEET
62	Male	EHCP pending	Redbridge	Dagenham College

Key Stage 5

98. At year 12 entry, all Children Looked After are allocated a new Education Advisor who will guide them through the two years of Key Stage 5. Advisors provide support through advocacy, planning for the future, academic guidance and the sourcing of opportunity.

99. Each child will receive two Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings per year, have access to an Education Psychologist and Speech and Language therapist and receive bespoke Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG).

100.   Any young person who is not in education, employment or training (NEET) will have a bespoke action plan. Young people who come into Care in KS5 will have a PEP meeting within 10 working days and we aim to place in an education or training provision with 14 days of the PEP meeting. School/College attendance is monitored throughout the two years in KS5 and transition support from each year group: 11>12, 12>13, 13>Leaving Care is put in place.

The Cohort

Table 19: 2022-23 Year 12 and Yr13 Cohort		
Gender		
Male	119	65%
Female	64	35%
SEN/EHCP		
SEN Support	18	10%
EHCP	39	21%
Total SEN	57	31%
IN/OUT borough		
In borough	44	24%
Out of borough	139	76%

Breakdown of Education Provision of the Key Stage 5 Population 2022-23

101.   The following data represents a 'snapshot' of the cohort in May 2023. The figures can vary through the academic year due to young people leaving/entering the service/ moving courses/ becoming NEET/ entering EET/ turning 18.

Table 20: **Destinations KS5**	**May 2023**	
Type	**Year 12**	**Year 13**
FE College	56 (62%)	52 (57%)
6th form college	14 (15%)	13 (14%)
Alternative provision	7 (8%)	8 (9%)
Training/Employment	0	4 (4%)
Youth Offending Institutions	2 (2%)	0
NEET	12 (13%)	15 (16%)
Total	91	92

102.   The majority of learners in years 12 and 13 attend Further Education (FE) College. FE Colleges are particularly popular because they offer vocational courses alongside academic pathways in addition to *English for Speakers of other Languages* (ESOL). This provision meets the needs of our Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC).

103.   6th Form Colleges provide for students wishing to pursue an academic route, usually A' levels, in an extension of the School environment.

Supporting the NEET Cohort

104.   14% of the Key Stage 5 cohort (years 12 and 13) were NEET (not in education, employment or training) at the time these figures were collated (May 2023).

105.   The Virtual School are aspirational for all our children and young people and to this end we work particularly hard to ensure that those who are NEET are given every opportunity to access education or training.

106.   A weekly NEET clinic involves all staff in KS5. Education Advisors, a CIAG Advisor and the Deputy Head come together to scrutinise the 'NEET list' and cases are addressed individually. Strategies are discussed and plans put in place to support a return to EET.

Action Plans

107.   Each young person identified as NEET will have an action plan that is updated and maintained by their Education Advisor. This action plan will detail in chronological order the interventions, the support in put in place and opportunities offered to enable the young person to change their situation.

National Statistics for Number of Southwark Children In Education Employment and Training (EET)

108.   Through the academic year 2022-23 the 17-18 cohort had an EET figure of 80-84% this compared most favourably with that of our London neighbours and nationally, in fact for Virtual schools **with a cohort of over 80 CLA, Southwark's figures were the best in the UK.**

T 21: National Statistic for Children looked after in England including adoption: 2021 to 2022		
Local Authority	Number of Students	Percentage
Rutland	11	100
City of London	15	100
West Berkshire	30	94
Leicester	64	89
Bath and North East Somerset	24	89
Kensington and Chelsea	42	89
Westminster	57	88
Cornwall	66	87
Southwark	81	84

https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2021-to-2022

Breakdown of Academic levels of Key Stage 5 population 2022-23 May 2023

Table 22: Breakdown of KS5 Academic levels		
Level	**Yr 12**	**Yr 13 (inc18yo)**
Entry	30	23
Level 1	14	13
Level 2	18	11
Level 3/ A' Level	17	27
Employed	0	3
NEET	12 (13%)	15 (16%)
Total	91	92

109.   This table illustrates that the greater proportion of learners in years 12 and 13 are studying at Entry Level (29%). The high number of ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) students who are entering Education in the UK and might be studying English for the first time influences this figure.

110.   Students on L1 and L2 courses will generally be on a vocational pathway that might also include Maths/English GCSE retakes.

111.   Year 13 students on A' level/ Level 3 courses include both first and second year study at this level. Those completing A levels this year are detailed below.

A' level Results and Destinations

112.   The table below details A' level/ Level 3 results for exams taken in the 2023 exam series along with destinations for the coming academic year.

Table 23: A' level Results and Destinations				
Student	**Subject 1 Grade**	**Subject 2 Grade**	**Subject 3 Grade**	**Destination yr 14**
Year 13 student	A Level Economics A*	A Level Sociology A	A Level Government & Politics A	Oxford University- St Hugh's College, Law
Year 13 student	A Level English B	A Level Philosophy B	A Level Drama B	Southampton University
Year 13 student	Biology A' Level C	Chemistry A Level B	Psychology A Level A	University of Manchester - Psychology
Year 13 student	A Level History C	A Level Psychology C	A Level Government & Politics C	University - Greenwich Criminology.
Year 13 student	Level 3 BTEC in Sports **Dist/Dist/Dist**			St Mary's University- Law and Business
Year 13 student	A Level History C	A Level Psychology D	A Level Drama C	University of Sussex - Drama
Year 13 student	Biology A level	Chemistry A level	Maths A level	McGee engineering app'ship

Year 13 student	Drama/Theatre Studies (A Level) D	Creative Digital Media (BTech) Pass	Psychology (Btech) Pass	Central Film School London
Year 13 student	Sports- Merit	IT- Merit	Business -Pass	University LSBU - Business/sport
Year 13 student	Applied Science L3 Merit,Distinction,Pass			Seeking Apprenticeship
Year 13 student	A-Level Biology	A-Level Physics	A-Level Chemistry	Open Study College - A levels yr 2
Year 13 student	L3 Art and Design Distinctions			North Kent College L4 Film production
Year 13 student	Level 3 Criminology pass			Southwark/Lambeth college L3 Drama
Year 13 student	BTEC Music Level 3 Distinction	GCSE maths		Superjam Canterbury- Music
Year 13 student	BTEC Science Level 3	BTEC Health & Social Care	BTEC Business	Blackfen School for Girls L3 yr 2
Year 13 student	Maths A Level	Physics A level	Economics A Level	Seeking Employment
Year 13 student	Level 3 Health & Social Care			Southwark College Health and Social Care L3
Year 13 student	Equine studies L3 Pass			Hadlow College, Tonbridge yr 2 Equine studies

Year 13 A level/ Level 3 Results Summary

113. Results day 2023 yielded the following headlines:

- 8 students (out of 10) received offers for their first choice Universities.
- 1 Student achieved AAA* to meet and accept the offer from Oxford University (this is a case study within this report).
- 8 Students progressed to year 2 of their A level/L3 course.
- 1 student progressed to L4 study with level 3 distinctions.
- 1 student has started a higher apprenticeship with McGee Engineering. This is a female student meeting a deficit within this field.

114. A' levels were marked externally this year following two years of teacher assessment. Within this context we are very proud of the results that our students have achieved. These include straight A's, straight B's, ABC's, Distinctions and Merits.

115. Such academic achievements are scaffolded by the ongoing collaboration between Education and Social Care and is a testimony to the aspirational values we share.

Case Study

Student A entered Care in 2017, aged 12, having been brought into the UK from abroad. This child was placed in education by the Virtual School. It was apparent that there was trauma and individual learning needs so an EHCP process was started. Additional tuition was arranged to support in addressing missed education.
Child A was referred to CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) for counselling.
Following a challenging period including school exclusions 'A' was transferred to a Pupil Referral Unit. Virtual School intervention in year 11 facilitated a move to an Academy where good GCSE results were achieved.
'A' was then supported onto a place at a Local FE college to study A' levels. Through this time this student has received regular supplementary tuition, mentoring and work experience opportunities with City law Companies.
Student A achieved grades of A*,A, A in his A' levels and has accepted an offer to study Law at Oxford University.
The intervention and casework around student A illustrates the importance of advocacy and planning in support of our students. It also highlights how the aspirational approach adopted by the Virtual School can help all students succeed.

I h___estly never pic___ ___ ver getting ___ Leve___ s - let ___ securing a place ___ ersity of Oxf___ ___ e been able t___ both of these thi___ ___ t of my succe___ ___ owes itself to the immense support ___ ___ce that I've recei___ rom the Virtual Scho___ ver the y___ ___ when I was sen___ to a Pup___ ___ U___ ___in ___ o b___ ficient, but to m___ ___ ___ ne my ___ cation ___ o___ constant reassuring, acti___ supportive force for m___ ___ing my ___ e there, which ev___ ___ ___ ___ ___o my re entry to a mainstream s___ ___ from there I continu___ o struggle with punctuality, school work, ___ ___viour, but it was precisely because of the Virtual School's immutable ___ ___ompassionate willpower that I was ___ ___vercome these issu___ ___ ___ it was pr___ ___g___ e with r___ h n___ ___ ___toring services, g___ erat___ cational res___ ___ ___ upport, I've always been able ___ ___ t on the Virtual School a___ ___eir ___ rking members, who have ___ ___ ___ ___ ___portive roles with that zeal a___ compassion which one s___ n f___ in others throughout life.

-Student A (Southwark CLA)

The Virtual School Higher Education Season, January 2023

116.   Southwark Virtual School is proud of our record of supporting Looked after Students into University. These are students have overcome barriers to succeed at the highest level in statutory education and have chosen an academic path as an undergraduate.

117.   We are also aware that there are alternative career paths so we will continue to offer guidance on Apprenticeships at all levels.

118.   In January 2023 we hosted our second season of Higher Education workshops. Building on the success of our inaugural event we expanded the delivery to include Goldsmith's and Greenwich Universities alongside our existing partners at the Universities of York, UCL and London South Bank.

119.   We also welcomed back *NotgoingtoUni* to present on apprenticeships. We also hosted the very popular returning Care Leaver talk where a current undergraduate shared her own experiences at a Russell Group University.

120.   All participants in the workshops received 'love to shop' vouchers and fed back that they had found the sessions highly informative.

121.   Workshop content included the following:
   A. How to choose a University/Course
   B. Study Skills in higher education
   C. Student Accommodation
   D. *Will there be people like me/ will I fit in*?
   E. Student Finance
   F. Student support at University
   G. Apprenticeships- How do they work? Where do I find one?

122.   The following is a representation of feedback received:

I feel much more comfortable now I know about student accommodation and how things work in the first year
 Level 3 BTEC Student, year 12

I've learnt so much from the Apprenticeship workshop. I want to be an Engineer! Thank you
 A' Level student (female), year 13

The Finance workshop was really interesting- there is a lot of support for people like me!
A' level student,

Pupil Premium at post 16

123.　Southwark Virtual School successfully bid for 16+ Pupil Premium Pilot funding initiative in the last academic year.

124.　The DfE awarded the Virtual School £80,400 for 2022/23 for targeted KS5 spend.

125.　The following table illustrates areas of spend and outcomes.

Table 24: Pupil Premium at Post 16		
Provision	Description	Outcome
Supplementary tuition	1500 hours of tuition provided at KS5	Improved summative assessment/ exam results. Building confidence and competence in academic subjects.
Targeted spend	Including: Specialist equipment. Subscriptions related to study. Supplementary activities	Subject enrichment, enhanced academic support. Access to learning resources.
Student connection/ outreach	Virtual School APP This includes KS5 guides to: Higher Education, Apprenticeships Interview skills, Exam preparation	Greater connectivity with cohort. Student access to important information relating to their learning and futures.
Student connection/ Outreach	Higher Education and Apprenticeship workshops	Providing vital information to students so they make informed decisions about their future.
Training in Schools and Colleges	Trauma informed training aimed at Designated Teachers	Providing Designated Teachers with context and insight into the potential complexities of looked after children. Provision of strategies to enhance student retention and achievement.
Targeted therapeutic support	Speech and Language Therapy service (SALT) Education Psychology (EP)service	SALT assessments and EP support to support academic and social progress. Students develop a greater understanding of their learning. Assessments support teaching staff by providing insight into students learning needs and barriers.

Promoting the Education of Children with a Social Worker

126.   From September 2021, the role of Virtual Schools across the country was extended to include taking a 'strategic leadership role in promoting the educational outcomes of the cohort of children with a Social Worker and those who have previously had a Social Worker.   'Virtual school head role extension to children with a social worker'

127.   The Virtual School aims to narrow the gap for some of the most vulnerable children in our local authority. Previously, this was mainly children looked after and those on a special guardianship order but now includes all the children on a child protection plan or a child in need.

128.   The Virtual School Headteacher will work to:
- make visible the disadvantages that children with a social worker can experience, enhancing partnerships between education settings and local authorities to help all agencies hold high aspirations for these children
- promote practice that supports children's engagement in education, recognising that attending an education setting can be a protective factor to keep children safe
- level up children's outcomes and narrow the attainment gap so every child can reach their potential. This will include helping to make sure that children with a social worker benefit from support to recover from the impact of COVID-19
- identify the needs of children and young people eligible for the service
- support and advise key professionals to help children make progress, including through increasing their confidence in using evidence-based interventions

129.   What is in scope of the extended Virtual School Head role:
- As strategic leaders who champion children with a social worker, Virtual School Heads should create a culture of high aspirations and drive improved outcomes. They will:
- enhance partnerships between education settings and the local authority
- identify the cohort's needs and intervene to overcome barriers to poor educational outcomes and ensure pupils reach their potential
- support and advise key professionals to help children make progress, including through increasing their confidence in using evidence-based interventions

130.   Defining the cohort of children with a social worker:
'Children with a Social Worker' (CWSW) includes all children who have been assessed as needing or previously needing a Social Worker within the past 6 years due to safeguarding and/or welfare reasons. It includes all children aged 0 to 18 across all education settings subject to a CiN plan or a Child Protection plan. Southwark current CWSW cohort includes CIN 878 children and CPP 235 children

131.   Children with a Social Worker Figures -

132. Table 25: Children with a Social Worker Figures	
Category	Current Number
Subject to Child In Need Plan	833
Subject to Child Protection Plan	270
Looked After Children	395
Total	1498

Source: Children Social Care Data Snapshot 03.10.2203

Virtual School Priorities

133. Strengthen our response to concern around persistent absence. Through targeted casework, data analysis, early intervention and regular multi-agency panels to agree priority actions.

134. To promote the educational outcomes of children with a social worker. Work with early years settings, schools, colleges and social care leaders to create a culture of high aspirations that helps all children with social workers to make educational progress.

[Promoting the education of children with a social worker: Virtual School Head role extension](#)

135. Support the development of CPD (Continuing Professional Development) to our Designated Teachers and Social Workers and School leaders, including attachment aware and trauma informed schools, by delivering a flexible and diverse training programme with an aim to improve inclusive practice, build capacity and reduce suspensions/exclusions.

136. In relation to National Tuition Funding and Covid recovery – Narrow the attainment gap, lost learning and mental health support. Continue to provide support and interventions for schools and children to improve outcomes and attendance, evaluating the impact of the intervention and use of Pupil Premium.

Item No	Classification	Date:	Meeting name :
		14 September 2023	Social Care SLT
Report title		Exclusions of Looked after Children	
Ward(s) or groups affected		Children in Care of Southwark Council	
From		Usha Singh, Virtual School Headteacher	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Care Senior Leadership Team notes this report from Southwark Virtual School in response to the request for an overview of the work, including data in relation to attendance, Children Missing Education as well as the suspensions and exclusions of Children in Care of London Borough of Southwark.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. Legislation covering the exclusion process is explained in guidance produced by the Department for Education,
   Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance September 2023 (publishing.service.gov.uk)
   Working together to improve school attendance (publishing.service.gov.uk)

3. The role of the Virtual School Headteacher in relation to exclusion of looked after and previously looked after children is further outlined in the guidance.
   Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children

4. Communications to schools from the Dfe for the start of this academic year
   Letter to school leaders on mild illness and school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
   A guide for parents on school behaviour and exclusion - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

5. Looked after children are more than five times more likely to have a suspension than all children, and nearly one and a half times more likely than children in need.

6. Looked after children as a collective have disproportionately high rates of exclusion and are particularly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of an exclusion.

COMMUNITY IMPACT STATEMENT

7. The Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010 will apply. This requires that the Council has due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out its activities.

8. In this regard the exclusion of Looked after children who possess one or more of the protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, the council will exercise of all its functions, and will have due regard (section 149 Equality Act 2010) to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct, (b) to advance equality of opportunity and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

The Virtual School holds an **Attendance Panel once every month** and **Children Missing Education Panel every week** of the academic year as well as during school holidays with the aim that there is weekly follow up on actions taken to secure education and that children are in education.

9. **Attendance**

9.1. The Virtual School commissions an external attendance monitoring service that provide daily information.

9.2. Southwark looked after children persistent absence rate recorded in the 2022-2023 academic year is **29% (62 Children).**

Table 26: Persistent Absentees by Month		
Month	Students	%
Sep-22	81	33%
Oct-22	74	30%
Nov-22	66	26%
Dec-22	66	26%
Jan-23	69	27%
Feb-23	67	26%
Mar-23	75	29%
Apr-23	75	29%
May-23	81	31%
Jun-23	83	31%
Jul-23	62	29%

9.3. Southwark Persistent and Severe Absentees are recorded as 51% (30) Girls 49% (29) boys.

Table 27: Persistent Absence by Gender		
Female	25	40%
Male	37	60%

9.4. Children with SEN appear on the list of persistent absentee.

Table 28: SEND profile of the Persistent Absentee Cohort		
	2021-2022	2022-2023
EHCP	18	21
SEN Support	4	6
No SEN	37	35
Total	22	62

9.5.   Actual Percentage Attendance in the Persistent Absentee Cohort

Table 29: Actual Percentage Attendance in the Persistent Absentee Cohort		
%	2021-2022	2022-23
0% - attendance Includes children who recently came into care and no school place	3	11
1% - 29%	8	5
30% - 49%	3	2
50% - 59%	16	4
60% - 69%	7	8
70% - 79%	8	8
80% - 89%	14	24

9.6.   Ethnicity of children on the list of persistent absentee.

Table 30 : Southwark Persistent Absence - Ethnicity		
	2022-2023	
Asian/Asian British/Any other Asian Background	2	3%
Black/Black British	1	2%
Black/Black British /African	13	21%
Black/Black British/Any other Black background	5	8%
Black/Black British/Caribbean	8	13%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups/Any other Mixed background	3	5%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups/White and Black African	2	3%
Not disclosed	1	2%
Other Ethnic Groups/Any other ethnic group	5	8%
White / British	13	21%
Total	62	100%

9.7.   Actual Percentage Attendance in the Persistent Absentee Cohort by Year Group indicates that children in 10 and 11 make up 65% of all Persistent Absentees.

Table 31: Actual Percentage Attendance in the Persistent Absentee Cohort by year Group		
Year Group	2021-2022	2022-2023
Yr R to Yr 6	11	8
Year 7	2	2
Year 8	5	3
Year 9	7	9
Year 10	15	12
Year 11	19	28
Total	59	62

9.8. Key Stage 4 is over represented with 34 children recorded as Persistent Absentees.

- Attendance in this group is largely due to school refusal that relates to post pandemic effects and SEN sufficiency issues, which is a current concern across many Local Authorities. Intensive work is taking place to turn this around and improve access to education for this groups.
- All children in this group were offered additional tuition and exceptionally funded tuition to work towards the exam. Exam centres are arranged accordingly so children can sit exams.
- 3 children are Unaccompanied Asylums seeking children. 1 arrived in the country this academic year.

9.9. Southwark Absence reasons PA cohort – Reasons

Table 32: Southwark Absence reasons PA cohort – Reasons				
Year	2021-2022		2022-2023	
Medical			5	8%
School Refuser			7	0%
Change of care placement - one or more placement change.	32	54%	39	62%
New to care	9	15%	8	13%
UASC	3	5%	1	2%
Exclusions	9	15%	3	5%
Authorised Absence			14	23%
Illness			7	11%
Lates			4	6%
Unauthorised Absence			12	19%

10. **How we monitor attendance:**

- The Virtual School commissions an external attendance monitoring service that provide daily information. This includes daily phone calls rather than electronic collection methods so we have live up to date details of the reasons for absences.
- Each day live attendance information is collected and is shared with the Virtual School. Each day we know whether our children are in school or if they are not present on the day.
- We get alerts when children are taken off roll, receive a suspension and excluded. The vast majority of schools are excellent in communicating these instances with the Virtual School allowing us the opportunity to advocate for children.
- The Virtual School monitors daily patterns, exclusions and queries that arise from missed attendance, this is forwarded to Social Workers and Education Advisors for immediate follow up.
- Project Officers also contact schools directly when we spot that the attendance codes they are using does not match the feedback from Education Advisors and Social workers.

11. **How we respond to persistent absenteeism**
   - We hold a monthly attendance panel with Social Workers present. The Education Advisors and Social workers hold impressive knowledge of reasons for absence, and also suggested approaches to improve attendance.
   - Transition funding is offered to school where in year admissions take place to ensure attendance is supported and the education placement works.
   - The Virtual School advocates for children when they receive suspensions or are at risk of exclusion with significant success and find solutions with schools.
   - We secure education at the point of a placement change as quickly as we possibly can, in order to offer stability of care placements.
   - Tuition is available to ensure that we avoid gaps in learning.
   - We hold a monthly attendance panel with Social Workers present. The Education Advisors and Social workers hold impressive knowledge of reasons for absence but also suggested approaches to improve attendance.
   - We offer Education Psychology, Speech and language, mentors and coaches which is funded through the Virtual School Pupil Premium Plus.
   - We trigger statutory assessments for SEN when we can spot signs that this can improve engagement and in return attendance.
   - Together with Colleagues in Care we arrange transportation for children who cannot easily make their way to school be it for distance reasons or undiagnosed SEN.
   - For year 11 children who are refusing school and cannot be swayed to attend, we plan ahead with Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) so we can work towards the best outcomes for successful transition into adulthood. We secure exam centres and work toward children sitting their exams.
   - Ensure the school is aware of care status, early years trauma and that school is attachment aware.
   - We offer strategy meetings with the wider multi-agency network and involve the support of Foster Carers.
   - Persistent Absentee list 10 children had an Education Psychology assessment, exceptional payments to support attendance was paid to 6 schools who employed additional staff to support children, Speech and language Support was also offered to all school and 6 children accessed this. Additional Tuition offer - Over 500 hours of additional tuition was provided to our persistent absentees.

12. **Not just persistent absentees**
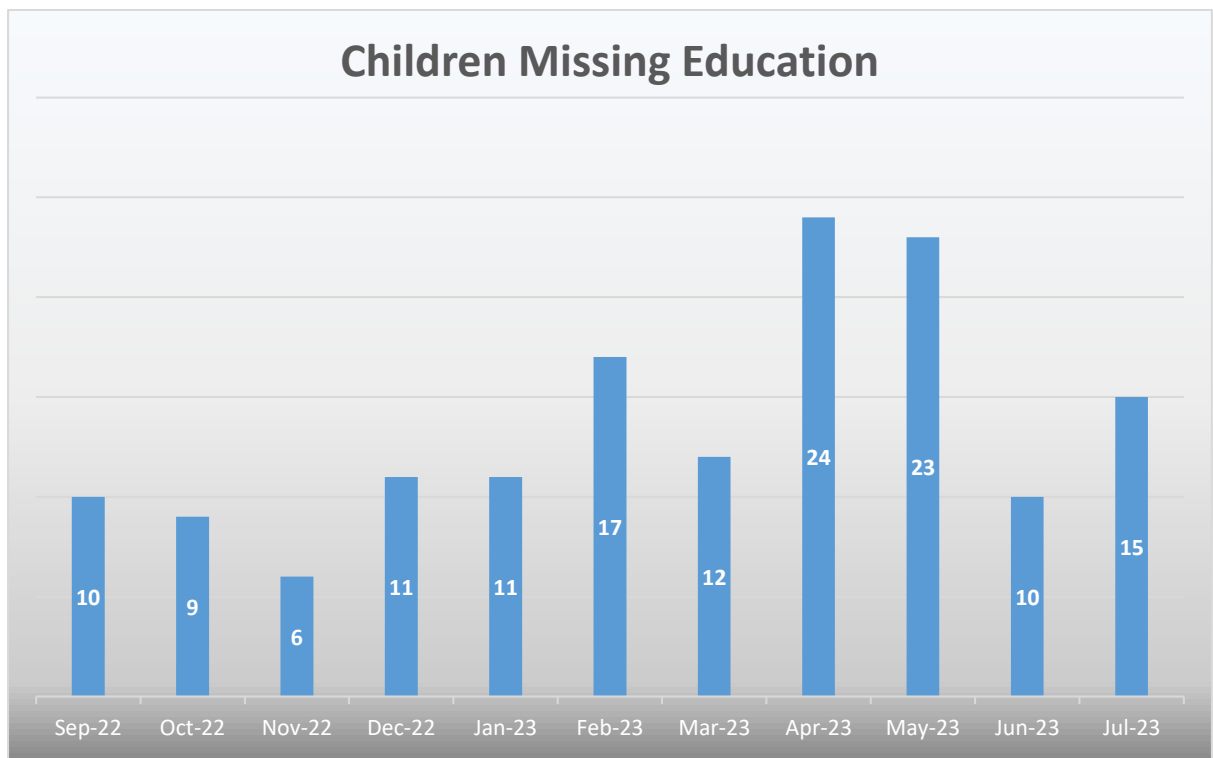   - There are at times less obvious patterns can easily go unnoticed. Sudden absences, for example, may well be due to illness, or a bereavement in the family, but they could also be more concerning reasons, particularly if they are unexplained.
   - In the vast majority of cases, sudden absences are explained when the child returns to school but the Virtual School is vigilant of unexplained patterns.

13. **Children Missing Education**

"Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. [Children Missing Education, Statutory guidance for local authorities](#)

13.1. The Virtual School strives to ensure that looked after children are in education. Schools are the safest place for children to be and through partnership work with key professions, instances where children are out of education are addressed swiftly to ensure that education placements are secured without delay.

13.2. The largest contributing factor delaying school placement is SEN sufficiency across the country. Virtual School and care colleagues are working with SEN team across the country to address this.

13.3. The increase in number of children coming into Care and the increasing complexity of securing placement is an area that is felt nationally.

13.4. The graph below plots the number of children with no school place recorded from April 22 to March 23.

Children Missing Education

Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23
10	9	6	11	11	17	12	24	23	10	15

13.5.   At the time of this report there were currently 10 children on the CME list.

Table 33: Weekly CME Summary Breakdown		
Summary		
No. Children on the CME list	10	
No. Children Female	1	10%
No. Children Male	9	90%
No. Children with accessing interim tuition	6	60%
No. Children with EHCP	4	40%
No. Children with SEN support	1	10%
No. Children with no EHCP or SEN support	5	60%
No. Children accessing interim tuition with EHCP	3	30%
No. Children accessing interim tuition - No EHCP	3	30%
No. Children missing from care	1	10%
No moved from CME to receiving tuition	0	0%
No. Children moved off CME	0	0%
No. New cases	0	0%

13.6.   Some reasons children or young people may be missing education:
- The child/young person may be new into care and due to where the child/young person is placed, they are not able to attend their existing school
- The child moves placement as an emergency
- Prior to coming into care, the child was electively home educated
- Proximity of new placement means the child cannot attend their existing school.
- The child may leave secure or residential care which has education on site.
- The child may have SEN needs and the network may be unable to source specialist provision that can meet the needs as identified on the EHCP.
- The child/young person may be permanently excluded and new education provision is being arranged.
- The child/young person may be placed in an area which lacks alternative provision options and mainstream may not be suitable.

13.7.   The Virtual School holds a **Children Missing Education Panel every week** of the academic year as well as during school holidays with the aim that there is weekly follow up on actions taken to secure education and that children are placed in education.
Records of discussions and actions as well as the follow up is recorded weekly and informs the planning in the week that follows.
CME panel members are: Virtual School Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher – Chair, All Virtual School Education Advisors (Stat School Age and KS5 Teams).

13.8.   **Escalation Process**
Education Advisors and Social Workers escalate education placement planning to the Virtual School Headteacher in the following circumstances:
- Where a child does not have an EHCP and remains unplaced beyond reasonable timelines
- Where a child has an EHCP and remains unplaced beyond statutory timelines
- Where there is a risk that the child is at risk of Children Missing Education,
- Where there is gap in education while school provision is being finalised and tuition is requested during the waiting period.

13.9. Children at Risk of CME
Southwark Virtual School also monitors looked after children considered at risk of CME as part of the weekly CME panel.
- There is a change of care placement in the near future.
- The child is at risk of a permanent exclusion (PEX).
- The child has an EHCP and there is a school consultation process
- There is drift in funding agreements regarding securing education placements.

14. SOUTHWARK LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN EXCLUSION DATA

14.1. Suspensions and Permanent Exclusion Data. Southwark recorded no **Permanent exclusions last year.**

Table 34: Southwark CLA – Exclusion Data				
	2016 -2017	2017- 2018	2018 -2019	2022/2023
Virtual School Roll - School Age	**355**	**341**	**328**	**267**
Children subject to Suspensions	45 (13%)	63 (18%)	51 (16%)	37 (14%)
Number of Suspensions	108	145	108	82
Number of Permanent Exclusion	4	1	2	0

14.2. Southwark CLA Suspensions by Gender

Table 35: Southwark CLA Suspensions by Gender				
	2016 -2017	2017- 2018	2018 -2019	2022-2023
Boys	31 (69%)	45 (71%)	37 (73%)	27 (73%)
Girls	14 (31%)	18 (29%)	14 (27%)	10 (27%)
Total	**45**	**63**	**51**	**37**

14.3. Southwark CLA Suspensions with SEN

Table 36: Suspensions of Southwark CLA with SEN								
	2016 -2017		2017- 2018		2018 -2019		2022-2023	
All children w' FTE	45		63		51		37	
with SEN EHCP	13	29%	12	19%	12	24%	11	30%
with SEN Support	11	24%	12	19%	12	24%	7	19%
Total with SEN	**24**	**53%**	**24**	**38%**	**24**	**47%**	**18**	**49%**

14.4. Southwark CLA 2022 -2023 Suspensions by Year Group

Table 37: Southwark CLA 2022 -2023 Suspensions by Year Group									
Year Group	Year 1-3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Pupils Excluded	0	0	1	0	2	9	8	7	10
Exclusions	0	0	2	0	11	19	21	12	17
Rate of exclusion	0	0	2	0	5.5	2.1	2.6	1.7	1.7

The table shows the number of Southwark looked after children who received a Suspension from each year group. In line with national and local trends for looked after and non-looked after cohorts, exclusion rates of Southwark looked after children increase as children reach KS3 and KS4.

14.5. Southwark CLA Suspensions by Ethnicity

Table 38: Southwark CLA Suspensions - Ethnicity	2016-2017		2017-2018		2018-2019		2022-2023	
Asian/Asian British/Bangladeshi	1	2%	0	0%	1	2%	1	3%
Asian/Asian British/Pakistani	x	x	x	x	x	x	1	3%
Black/Black British/African	7	16%	16	25%	12	24%	7	19%
Black/Black British/Any other Black background	6	13%	7	11%	3	6%	2	5%
Black/Black British/Caribbean	8	18%	6	10%	8	16%	5	14%
British African	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%	0	
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups/Any other Mixed background	2	4%	0	0%	1	2%	4	11%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups/White and Black African	2	4%	6	10%	3	6%	2	5%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups/White and Black Caribbean	4	9%	10	16%	6	12%	7	19%
Not disclosed	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%
Other Ethnic Groups/Any other ethnic group	1	2%	0	0%	1	2%	1	3%
White/Any other White Background	2	4%	1	2%	2	4%	1	3%
White/British	12	27%	16	25%	13	25%	6	16%
Total	**45**		**63**		**51**		**37**	

14.6. Southwark CLA Average Rate of Suspensions per excluded child

Table 39: Southwark CLA Average Rate of Suspensions - 3 Year Trend	2016 -2017	2017- 2018	2018 -2019	2022-2023
Number of Children FTE	45	63	51	37
No of FTE	108	145	108	82
Average number of FTE per child	**2.4**	**2.3**	**2.1**	**2.2**

In the 2018-2019 academic year the number of students decreased as did the average number of Suspension episodes per child.. The average number of Suspensions has reduced marginally year on year. This reflects a slight reduction in students repeating behaviours that result in multiple Suspensions.

14.7. Southwark CLA Suspensions – In Borough and Out Borough

Table 40: Southwark CLA Suspensions – In Borough and Out Borough	2016 -2017		2017 -2018		2018 -2019		2022-2023	
In Borough	4	9%	14	22%	10	20%	6	16%
Out Borough	41	91%	49	78%	41	80%	31	84%

14.8. **Southwark CLA Suspensions – Reasons**

The table relates to the reasons for exclusions of Southwark looked after children. In some instances, Suspension was requested by Southwark Virtual School, as the Virtual School was challenging the practice of some secondary schools 'informally' excluding young people. Where there were instances of threat of permanent exclusion, Suspensions were suggested as other possible sanctions or options for education were considered.

Table 41: Southwark CLA Suspensions – Reasons						
Year	**2017-2018**		**2018-2019**		**2022-2023**	
Drug/Alcohol Related	4	3%	2	2%	2	2%
Aggressive Behaviour	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Bullying	0	0%	2	2%	1	1%
Damage	3	2%	1	1%	1	1%
Disruptive Behaviour	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Persistent Disruptive Behaviour	17	12%	13	12%	26	32%
Drug and Alcohol Related	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Non - Cooperation with staff	7	5%	4	4%	0	0%
Physical aggression-staff & pupils	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%
Physical Assault - Pupil	9	6%	15	14%	9	11%
Physical Assault Adult (Staff)	13	9%	6	6%	1	1%
Racist Abuse	3	2%	1	1%	1	1%
Theft	1	1%	0	0%	2	2%
Truancy	1	1%	1	1%	0	0%
Unacceptable Behaviour	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Verbal Abuse/Threatening Behaviour Adult	0	0%	18	17%	2	2%
Verbal Abuse/Threatening Behaviour Pupil	30	21%	3	3%	5	6%
Other	57	12%	41	11%	24	29%
Abuse against sexual orientation and gender identity	x	x	x	x	2	2%
Inappropriate use of social media or online technology	x	x	x	x	1	1%
Use or threat of use of an offensive weapon/ prohibited item	x	x	x	x	2	2%
School Yet to Clarify	x	x	x	x	2	2%
Sexual Misconduct	x	x	x	x	1	1%
Total	145	100%	108	100%	82	100%

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