

# Southwark Virtual School

## Annual Headteacher's Report

Academic year 2023-2024



Artwork by M. Year 6

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# Preface

1. Grading continued as normal in summer 2024 exam series, following the return to pre-pandemic standards last year. Overall GCSE results are similar to summer 2023.
2. On a national level, GCSE entries have increased by more than 250,000 compared with summer 2023. There has been an increase in the 16-year-old population since 2023, and there are more entries from post-16 students this summer for GCSE English language and maths.  
[Guide to GCSE results for England, summer 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

# Introduction

3. This report is based on local authority held pupil information and results from schools for the academic year 2023/24.
4. This report presents an:
  - overview of the activities and impact of Southwark Virtual School to advocate for our children in care to ensure high aspirations and the best possible outcomes for each young person.
  - identifies areas of future development to achieve improved outcomes for our children in care. We want all children in care to achieve the best they can and promote success into adulthood, whatever age they came into our care.
  - highlights the multidisciplinary nature of the work – we are supported by our children in care, 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.
5. The data in this report is constantly updated from first issue until all national data becomes available.
6. Southwark local authority Children’s Services inspection of September 2022 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.  
[50198438 \(ofsted.gov.uk\)](https://www.ofsted.gov.uk/50198438)

## A Changing Education Landscape

### Updated Guidance – SEN funding

7. Children in care who are usually residing 'outside of their local area' has changed in 2023/24, for those who have education, health and care plan (EHCP). The guidance advises that children who have an EHCP should be maintained and funded by the local authority where they are 'usually resident'.
8. This is a significant departure from the Virtual School usual way of working with local authorities across the country. With the number of children with an EHCP the Virtual School will see a change in our ways of working. [High needs funding: 2023 to 2024 operational guide - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) – Annex 3

### CWSW Kinship addition – December 2023

9. Change made: Added ‘Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements: virtual school head role extension’. The guidance now includes how virtual school head teachers should promote the education outcomes of children in kinship care. [Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements: virtual school head role extension - GOV.UK](#)

### Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) updated for 2024

10. The DfE has updated [KCSIE](#) – the changes came into force on 1 September 2024. The changes this year were minimal, with the most notable changes including:
  - An updated definition of safeguarding and an updated list of early help indicators
  - New terminology and guidance around children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning – this section remains under review
  - References to the DfE's data protection guidance
  - Clarification around safeguarding responsibilities in alternative provision
  - Updated wording on elective home education

## Overhaul of Ofsted inspections

11. In September 2024, single headline Ofsted grades were removed with immediate effect. Instead, for inspections in the 2024/25 academic year, schools will receive 4 grades across the existing sub-categories:

- Quality of education
- Behaviour and attitudes
- Personal development
- Leadership and management

12. From September 2025, Ofsted will provide school report cards which will:

- Provide parents and carers with a full assessment of how schools are performing
- Ensure that inspections are more effective in driving improvement

## Updated attendance guidance applies from August 2024

13. Changes include:

- New requirements on keeping and sharing registers, including:
  - Keeping registers electronically
  - Sharing daily attendance data with the DfE
- A new national framework for issuing penalty notices, including:
  - A national threshold of absences to qualify for the use of penalty notices
  - Increased fines
- Clearer expectations for a senior attendance champion, including:
  - Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
  - Having a strong grasp of attendance data
- More detail about supporting pupils with physical or mental ill health

14. New government could mean more changes

The new Labour government [election manifesto](#) included these pledges, and some are just proposals, but some key changes to keep an eye out for are:

- A drive on recruitment and retention, including reviewing bursaries and the early career framework (ECF).

- Ofsted inspection reforms, including those already set out in the updated inspection handbook.
- A curriculum review, including improving the quality of maths teaching and protecting time for PE.
- Increased focus on inclusion and mental health, including free breakfast clubs in all primary schools and improving SEND expertise in mainstream schools. [Labour Party Manifesto 2024](#)

## Southwark's Children in Care Population

15. The data represents the current picture of the council's children in care of statutory school age. The number of children in care is constantly changing as children move in and out of care.

16. At the end of the 2023/24 academic year Southwark Virtual School recorded 364 students on roll. 257 children are statutory school age and 107 in Key Stage 5 (152 females 212 males). Boys are a larger proportion of the children. This has been a long term trend.

Table 1: Reported Gender – Statutory School Age					
	Total CLA	Male	%	Female	%
Nursery	3	3	1%	0	0%
Yr R	9	4	2%	5	2%
Yr 1	9	4	2%	5	2%
Yr 2	13	7	3%	6	2%
Yr 3	7	5	2%	2	1%
Yr 4	4	2	1%	2	1%
Yr 5	11	3	1%	8	3%
Yr 6	17	7	3%	10	4%
Yr 7	15	10	4%	5	2%
Yr 8	24	15	6%	9	4%
Yr 9	33	13	5%	20	8%
Yr 10	41	29	11%	12	5%
Yr 11	71	46	18%	25	10%

Total	257	148	58%	109	42%
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17. Nationally, the number of all pupils with special educational needs (SEN) increased to over 1.6 million pupils, which was an increase of 101,000 children.

- The percentage of pupils with an EHC plan has increased to 4.8%, from 4.3% in 2023.
- The percentage of pupils with SEN (SEN support) but no EHC plan has increased to 13.6%, from 13.0% in 2023. [Special educational needs in England, Academic year 2023/24 GOV.UK](#)

18. In Southwark, the proportion of statutory school age children in care:

- with special educational needs is **44% (113)**;
- with an **EHCP is 32% (82)** compared to 4.8% nationally  
[Special educational needs in England, Academic year 2023/24 GOV.UK](#)

19. The geographic spread of Southwark Virtual School pupils remains like previous years. 75% of children in care are placed outside of the borough.

20. 78% (201 children) of Southwark statutory school age children in care are in secondary education.

<b>Table 2: Special Education Needs / In and Out of Borough by</b>					
	<b>Total CLA</b>	<b>EHCP</b>	<b>SEN Support</b>	<b>In Borough</b>	<b>Out Borough</b>
Nursery	3	0	0	1	2
Yr R	9	0	0	6	3
Yr 1	9	2	0	4	5
Yr 2	13	5	0	2	11
Yr 3	7	1	1	4	3
Yr 4	4	0	0	3	1
Yr 5	11	3	1	2	9
Yr 6	17	5	3	6	11
Yr 7	15	4	2	3	12
Yr 8	24	11	3	4	20
Yr 9	33	19	2	8	25

**Table 2: Special Education Needs / In and Out of Borough by**

	Total CLA	EHCP	SEN Support	In Borough	Out Borough
Yr 10	41	15	8	5	36
Yr 11	71	17	11	17	54
Total	257	82	31	65	192

21. The ethnicity of children, while in contrast to the national cohort, remains in line with our statistical neighbours and reflects similarities of the demographics of Southwark's resident population and of inner-city London.

**Table 3: Southwark's Cohort Breakdown by Ethnicity**

Ethnicity	Number	%
Asian/Asian British/Any other Asian Background	6	2%
Asian/Asian British/Bangladeshi	1	0%
Asian/Asian British/Indian	1	0%
Black/Black British	2	1%
Black/Black British/African	53	21%
Black/Black British/Any other Black	1	0%
Black/Black British/Any other Black background	21	8%
Black/Black British/Caribbean	26	10%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups/Any other Mixed background	24	9%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups/Any other Mixed background	1	0%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups/White and Asian	1	0%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups/White and Black African	10	4%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups/White and Black Caribbean	26	10%
Not Stated/Information not yet obtained - not refused	5	2%
Other Ethnic Groups/Any other ethnic group	13	5%
White/Any other White Background	7	3%
White/British	58	23%



White/Irish	1	0%
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## Ofsted Ratings of Schools in which we place Southwark’s Looked After Children

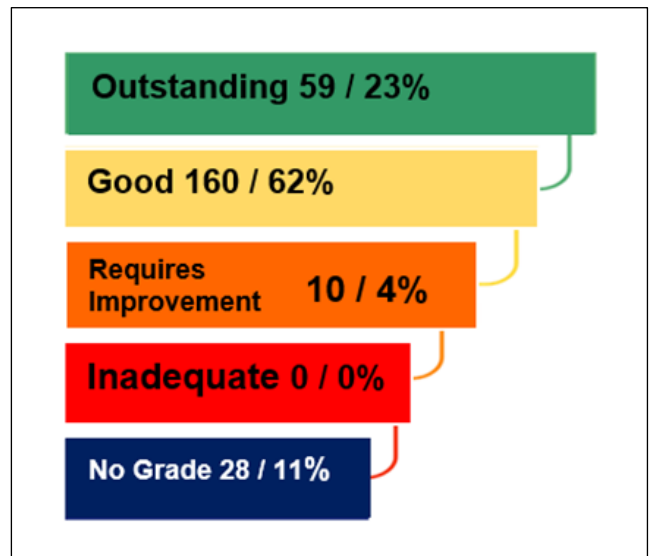
22. As the new guidance will see a shift moving away from school ratings, Southwark Virtual School will keep up to date with these changes and we will continue to ensure that we place children in schools where they will thrive. Removal of Ofsted single word judgements: what it means for schools and parents – The Education Hub



23. The distribution of Southwark looked after children by Ofsted ratings of the education provision they attend shows that 4% (10 children) attend provision that is in requires improvement.

24. Of the 10 children in schools graded as requires improvement:

- 5 children were placed in a good school prior to the Ofsted inspection that saw the school move to requires improvement status.
- 2 children were already attending the Requires Improvement Provisions prior to coming into Care.
- 1 child with an EHCP was placed in a school that after consultation as the only school that could meet needs
- 1 child was placed by LA Admissions.
- 1 child was placed by foster carer



25. 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

26. Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn. [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#)
27. Evidence shows that the students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A level results. 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. [The link between absence and attainment at KS2 and KS4, GOV.UK](#)
28. Attendance remains a key priority for the Virtual School and social work teams 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.
29. Southwark children in care persistent absence rate recorded at the end of the academic year 2023/24 was 31% (**79 Children**). The data shows that there is an increase in occurrences of persistent absence later in the academic year as exams approach.

Table 4: Persistent Absentees by Month 2024/25		
Month	Students	%
Sep-23	54	24%
Oct-23	61	26%
Nov-23	61	25%
Dec-23	68	29%
Jan-24	68	29%
Feb-24	68	28%
Mar-24	68	28%
Apr-24	69	28%
May-24	69	28%
Jun-24	68	28%
Jul-24	79	31%

30. 38% (30) Girls 62% (49) boys show that boys are almost 2 times as likely to be persistent absentees than girls.

<b>Table 5: Persistent Absence by Gender</b>		
Female	30	38%
Male	49	62%

31. Children with no SEN appear to be overrepresented on the list of persistent absentees. This may point to a clue that identification of SEND may be required. Virtual School Education Advisors and children's social workers look into each instance and pursue SEN assessments where these may be required.

<b>Table 6: SEND profile of the Persistent Absentee Cohort</b>		
	2022-2023	2023-2024
EHCP	21	20
SEN Support	6	7
No SEN	35	52
Total	62	79

32. Percentage attendance of children who are persistently absent shows that several children are on the threshold of being persistently absent 80% to 89%.

<b>Table 7: Percentage Attendance in the Persistent Absentee Cohort</b>		
%	2022/23	2023/24
0% - attendance Includes children who recently came into care and no school place	11	4
1% - 29%	5	11
30% - 49%	2	12
50% - 59%	4	18
60% - 69%	8	9
70% - 79%	8	9
80% - 89%	24	16

33. The Virtual School and children’s social workers are constantly working towards strategies to ensure that these occurrences do not lead to embedded behaviours.
34. All children are discussed at Attendance and Children Missing Education Panels.
35. Percentage attendance of children who are persistently absent by year group indicates that children Years 10 and 11 make up 67% of all persistently absent children.

<b>Table 8: Percentage Attendance in the Persistent Absentee Cohort by year Group</b>		
<b>%</b>	<b>2022/2023</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
Yr R to Yr 6	8	7
Year 7	2	2
Year 8	3	4
Year 9	9	13
Year 10	12	19
Year 11	28	34
Total	62	79

36. Key Stage 4 is overrepresented with 53 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.
37. Absence reasons in the group of persistent absentees show that the main contributor to missing school episodes is linked with change of care placements. The Virtual School and social work Children in Care Team Managers have put systems in place to ensure that education forms part of the earliest discussions when a change of care placement is being considered. We will continue to keep this as an area of focus.

**Table 9: Southwark Absence reasons PA cohort – Reasons**

Year	2021-2022		2022-2023		2023-2024	
Medical			5	8%	2	3%
School Refuser			7	0%	0	0
Change of care placement 1 or more placement change.	32	54%	39	62%	59	87%
New to care	9	15%	8	13%	2	3%
UASC	3	5%	1	2%		
Exclusions	9	15%	3	5%	8	12%
Authorised Absence			14	23%	9	13%
Illness			7	11%	7	10%
Lates			4	6%	9	13%
Unauthorised Absence			12	19%	28	41%
Complex Case					2	3%
Family Holiday Unauthorised					1	1%
HMYOI – Reduced timetable					1	1%

**38. How Southwark Virtual School Monitors Attendance:**

- The Virtual School commissions an external attendance monitoring service that provide daily information. This includes daily phone calls for live up to date details of the reasons for absences.
- Each day attendance information is collected and shared with the Virtual School. The Virtual School monitors patterns, exclusions and queries from missed attendance, this is forwarded to social workers and Education Advisors for immediate follow up.
- Project officers contact schools directly when we spot that the attendance codes they are using does not match the feedback from Education Advisors and social workers.



### 39. How we respond to persistent absenteeism

- Transition funding is offered to school where in year admissions take place to ensure attendance is supported and the education placement works.
- We advocate for children when there are suspensions and risk of exclusion and find solutions with schools.
- We secure education at the point of a placement change as quickly as we possibly can, to offer stability of care placements.
- 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.
- 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.



### 40. 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.

# Suspension and Exclusion Data

41. Suspensions have increased, and that 1 child was permanently excluded last year.

Table 10: Southwark Children in Care – Suspension Data				
	2017/2018	2018 /2019	2022/2023	2023/2024
Virtual School Roll - School Age	<b>341</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>256</b>
Children subject to Suspensions	63 (18%)	51 (16%)	37 (14%)	40 (16%)
Number of Suspensions	145	108	82	95
Number of Permanent Exclusion	1	2	0	1

42. Suspensions by Gender shows that boys are twice as likely to be suspended than girls.

Table 11: Southwark Children in Care Suspensions by Gender				
	2017/2018	2018 /2019	2022/2023	2023/2024
Boys	45 (71%)	37 (73%)	27 (73%)	27(68%%)
Girls	18 (29%)	14 (27%)	10 (27%)	13(32%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>40</b>

43. Suspensions of children with SEN are particularly low. Children who do not have SEN are overrepresented in this group.

Table 12: Suspensions of Southwark Children in Care with SEN								
	2017/2018		2018/2019		2022/2023		2023/2024	
Suspensions	63		51		37		40	
with SEN EHCP	12	19%	12	24%	11	30%	16	40%
with SEN Support	12	19%	12	24%	7	19%	5	13%
<b>Total with SEN</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>53%</b>

44. The table below shows suspensions the number of children in care who received a suspension by year group. In line with national and local trends for looked after and non-looked after children, our suspension rates increase as children reach KS3 and KS4.

<b>Table 13: Southwark Children in Care 2023/2024 Suspensions by Year Group</b>									
Year Group	Yr 1-3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Pupils Suspended	3	0	0	0	2	7	4	7	11
Suspensions	4	0	0	0	2	17	16	13	22
Rate of suspension	1.3	0	0	0	1	2.4	4	2.6	2

45. The table below shows the average rate of suspensions per suspended child. This reflects a slight increase in students repeating behaviours that result in multiple suspensions.

<b>Table 14: Southwark Children in Care Average Rate of Suspensions - 3 Year Trend</b>				
	2017/2018	2018/2019	2022/2023	2023/2024
Number of Children Suspended	63	51	37	40
No of suspensions	145	108	82	95
Average suspensions per child	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.4</b>

### Southwark CLA Suspensions – Reasons

46. The table below relates to the reasons for suspensions. In some instances, suspensions were requested by Southwark Virtual School, as the Virtual School was challenging the practice of some secondary schools ‘informally’ suspending young people. Where there were instances of threat of permanent exclusion suspensions were suggested as other possible sanctions or options for education were considered.

<b>Table 15: Southwark Children in Care Suspensions – Reasons</b>									
Year	2017/2018		2018/2019		2022/2023		2023/2024		
Drug/Alcohol Related	4	3%	2	2%	2	2%	2	2%	
Aggressive Behaviour	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	X	0%	
Bullying	0	0%	2	2%	1	1%	X	0%	
Damage	3	2%	1	1%	1	1%	2	2%	
Disruptive Behaviour	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	X	0%	



**Table 15: Southwark Children in Care Suspensions – Reasons**

Year	2017/2018		2018/2019		2022/2023		2023/2024	
Persistent Disruptive Behaviour	17	12	13	12%	26	32%	28	29%
Drug and Alcohol Related	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	X	0%
Non - Cooperation with staff	7	5%	4	4%	0	0%	X	0%
Physical aggression staff/pupils	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	X	0%
Physical Assault - Pupil	9	6%	15	14%	9	11%	15	16%
Physical Assault Against an Adult	13	9%	6	6%	1	1%	9	9%
Racist Abuse	3	2%	1	1%	1	1%	1	1%
Theft	1	1%	0	0%	2	2%	3	3%
Truancy	1	1%	1	1%	0	0%	X	0%
Unacceptable Behaviour	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	X	0%
Verbal Abuse/Threat Behaviour Adult	0	0%	18	17%	2	2%	15	16%
Verbal Abuse/Threatening Behaviour Pupil	30	21%	3	3%	5	6%	4	4%
Other	57	12	41	11%	24	29%	15	16%
Abuse against sexual orientation and gender identity	X	X	X	X	2	2%	X	0%
Inappropriate use of social media	X	X	X	X	1	1%	X	0%
Offensive weapon or prohibited item	X	X	X	X	2	2%	X	0%
School Yet to Clarify	X	X	X	X	2	2%	1	1%
Sexual Misconduct	X	X	X	X	1	1%	X	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>

# Children Missing Education

47. All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have.

**Keeping Children Safe in Education**

48. 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 not in education, employment or training (NEET) later in life. [Children Missing Education - Guidance for Local authorities](#)

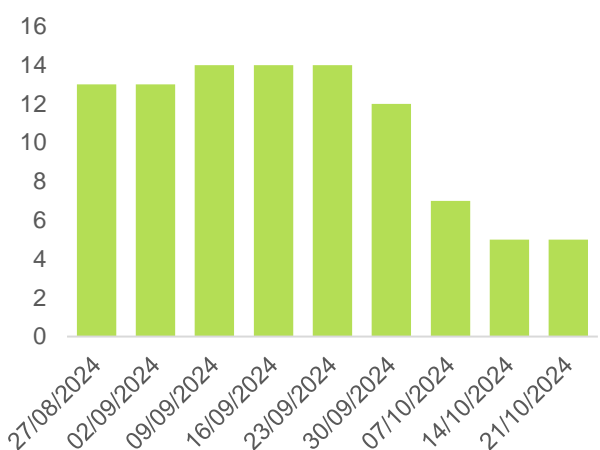
49. Since the start of this academic year the Virtual School and social work Children in Care teams have made significant strides in securing the education of children who did not have a school place. From 14 children at the start of the year, this number has now dropped to 5 with a secure plan in place for the remaining 5 children. This is a significant achievement when considering the complexity of securing education in the current climate of SEND sufficiency concerns across the country, limited ESOL provision for 14-16 and placing children who are in Year 11.

**Table 16: Weekly CME Totals**

27/8/24	2/9/24	9/9/24	16/9/24	23/9/24	30/9/24	7/10/24	14/10/24	21/10/24
13	13	14	14	14	12	7	5	5

- Student 1, Year 10, EHCP statement. Placed outside the borough, issues with file transfer due to insecure placement
- Student 2, Year 10, EHCP statement. Removed from school roll following an Annual Review - school can no longer meet needs. To avert the school's decision to permanently exclude.
- Student 3, Year 7, EHCP statement. Previously electively home educated.
- Student 4, Year 10, EHCP statement. Previous school ended placement citing they cannot meet need.
- Student 5, Year 8, EHCP statement. Off rolled from previous school

**CME Weekly Numbers**



## What we do to address the priority of ensuring children have a school place

50. Southwark Virtual School holds a Children Missing Education Panel every week of the academic year to secure education and that children are placed in education. Due to the link that between a child missing education and safeguarding, this panel is compulsory attendance where staff share their progress on securing education and can secure further support and also escalate circumstances where we face challenges in securing education.

51. **CME panel members are:** Virtual School Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher – Chair, All Education Advisors (EAs).

52. Some reasons **Children may be missing education include:**

- 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 [Southwark Council tries to ensure continuity of educational placement wherever possible]
- The child moves placement as an emergency [for example, if a care setting gives less than 28 days' notice] and new education provision needs to be sourced.
- Prior to coming into care, the child was electively home educated
- Proximity of new placement means the child cannot attend their existing school. The Virtual School tries to ensure continuity of educational placement wherever possible
- 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 the best place to meet educational needs.

### 53. 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. we consider a child to be at risk if:

- The child will be moving school or there is an imminent change of care placement.
- The child is at risk of a permanent exclusion (PEX).
- The child has an EHCP and there is a delayed school consultation process.

# Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

54. An unaccompanied asylum-seeking child 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.

55. The number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in care has increased this academic year with 92% of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are aged 16+.

Table 17: Number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children							
2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
41	53	51	44	53	49	54	58

56. **Challenges** – The intake of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children increasing across London has put a strain on Further Education College resources due to high demand for spaces. The additional challenge presented has been that of age dispute. Some colleges have been reluctant to admit those whose age or identity are disputed.

## 57. Successes –

- The Virtual School has an ESOL specialist education advisor who advises social workers, care placement key workers and young people on local community groups and refugee organisations that offer support and enrichment activities.
- The 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.
- Further Education (FE) Colleges offer flexible start dates throughout the academic year to ensure that UASC are placed on a course and can access education.
- The Virtual School work in partnership with local neighbour Virtual Schools in South East London as part of a UASC networking group, convening regularly to stay abreast of updates in ESOL education, resources and support available.
- In collaboration with Bromley, Bexley, Lewisham, Greenwich and Woolwich Virtual Schools Virtual Schools, we lead on hosting an ESOL Sports Festival in partnership with Charlton Athletic Football Club Community Trust (CACT) and Premiere League Kicks that was attended by 20 UASC and ESOL learners, 12 of which were Southwark young people. [Virtual School and CACT ESOL Sports Festival 2024](#)

- During the summer holidays, 10 Southwark young people were invited to attend a summer ESOL camp hosted by Winchmore Tutors at Crystal Palace Football Club for English lessons in the morning and sports activities in the afternoon.
- In partnership with Barnet Virtual School, a collection of informational ESOL videos were created for young people, explaining different elements of life in the United Kingdom.

## Pupil Premium Plus

58. 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.

59. Funding rates for the pupil premium in the financial year 2024 to 2025 is as follows:

- Looked-after children: £2,570 child, an increase of £40
- Children who have ceased to be looked-after: £2,570 per child paid directly to schools.
- Post-16 Pupil Premium Plus funding of £80,400 for the year 2023-24. This funding will increase to £106,755 for the year 2024-25.

60. The Virtual School ran a very successful Summer 2024 tuition programme over the holidays. It was a great success with 35 children (stat school age and KS5) who took up the opportunity to access additional tuition.



Between them, they accessed 414 hours of tuition was funded. Total costs for summer tuition was £19,301.00.

The feedback we have received has been excellent. The Virtual school will create more opportunities for children to access tuition during school holidays throughout the year.

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

- **Attendance monitoring** -The Virtual School commissions an external attendance monitoring service, Welfare Call.
- **Exceptional needs funding** to support children's attainment and social/mental health well-being by topping up allocations as required by schools.
- **Specialist Support Services** – The Virtual School recognises the significant trauma that many looked after children experience, which can profoundly affect their learning and development. To address these challenges, we ensure early and direct access to specialist support services, including educational psychology, and speech and language therapists. These services are crucial in helping children overcome learning barriers, ensuring that every child can thrive academically and personally. Currently, 32% of our children and young people have an EHCP, and 10% are recorded as having a special

educational need. Through timely interventions and tailored support, our specialist teams play a vital role in improving both educational outcome and future life chances.

- **Education Psychologist Service** - The Southwark Educational Psychologist (EP) Service provide essential support to children and young people who are experiencing difficulties in their learning or emotional and behavioural development at school. By working closely with school staff, carers, and the children/young people, our EP service applies psychological perspectives to identify and address the challenges impacting educational achievement.
- **Targeted input** includes collaborating with school staff and carers to develop strategies that support children's progress and inclusion, training and guidance to school teams, carers, and multidisciplinary networks, and ensuring consistent, holistic support across both home and school environments.
- **Specialist input** includes conducting individual assessment that inform pupil profiles and statutory documents such as EHCPs, setting personalise targets, developing support strategies and conducting regular progress reviews.
- **Speech and Language Therapy Service** - Many looked after children have unidentified speech, language, and communication needs, affecting both their understanding (making sense of what people say) and use of language (words and sentences). Our Speech and Language Service provides direct and indirect support to looked after children and their network, to strengthen their relationship building, communication skills and overall educational progress.
- **Targeted input includes** setting and reviewing targets, providing training for carers, social workers, and educators, and collaborating with multidisciplinary teams to ensure consistent, effective support.
- **Specialist input includes** 1:1 online therapy session with our children and young people, assessments, progress reports and practical strategies that children and young people can use in their daily interactions.
- **Fixed Term resourcing** with the employment of 5 Specialist Education Advisors, 1 Project Officer and 1 Information Advice and Guidance officers.
- **Supplementary Home Tuition** for pupils in full time education with a focus on English and maths to support academic achievement.
- **Exam support** to all looked after children -offer of 30 hours of additional tuition.
- **Interim Alternative Provision:** home tuition as part of a temporary transition provision for children who are between care placements, persistent absentees (school refusers) and other circumstances where this support is needed.



- **Online learning programme** 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.
- **Digital resource** - targeted curriculum related software to complement learning and to mitigate for changes in placements or missed schooling.
- **Letterbox Literacy** - Targeted resources for primary aged pupils targeted. Packages delivered to children are equipped with reading and writing material as well as stationery.
- **Storytime** - Storytime is a story magazine and a social enterprise - supporting families and reluctant readers with accessible reading material. Storytime supplies magazines to our primary-aged looked after children.



## Participation and Work with Speakerbox

62. Creating positive experiences with education and building a trusting and caring relationship with children and their families is a key component of keeping children engaged in education. Children who are engaged in education in this positive way are more likely to see academic progress.
63. The Virtual School contributes 50% of the cost of the post of a second Children’s Rights Project Officer post to Speakerbox. This has driven up participation and has helped strengthen bonds between children and the Local Authority as corporate parents.

Speakerbox Participation numbers with 2 Childs Rights Officers		
	April to December 2022	April to December 2023
Overall participation numbers	842 episodes	1292 episodes
Participation of under 13s	51 episodes	243 episodes
SEND participation	11 episodes	57 episodes

64. Sister Act the Musical at the Dominion Theatre - On 2 July 2024, the Virtual School collaborated with Speakerbox and accompanied 18 young people and their carers to see a relaxed performance of Sister Act the Musical at the Dominion Theatre. The Virtual School was able to offer an experience to gain social and cultural capital in the form of a West End show.

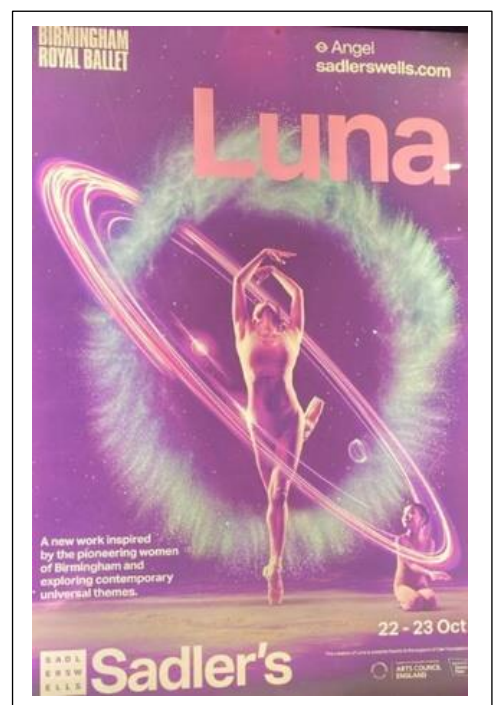


It was a glorious evening which everyone thoroughly enjoyed. At the end of the performance our young people were the first on their feet to applaud the performers! Their reactions to big band and gospel music was incredible.



We are in awe at the levels of compassion and respect shown by our young people towards the members of the public, front of house staff and the performers. Their behaviour was exemplary and they carried themselves with warmth and grace.

65. On the 23rd of October 2024, the Virtual School accompanied 25 young people and their carers to see a Ballet performance of Luna by the Birmingham Ballet Company at Sadlers Wells theatre. This experience facilitated the growth of social and cultural capital for our young people. It also allowed our carers to come together and support one another.

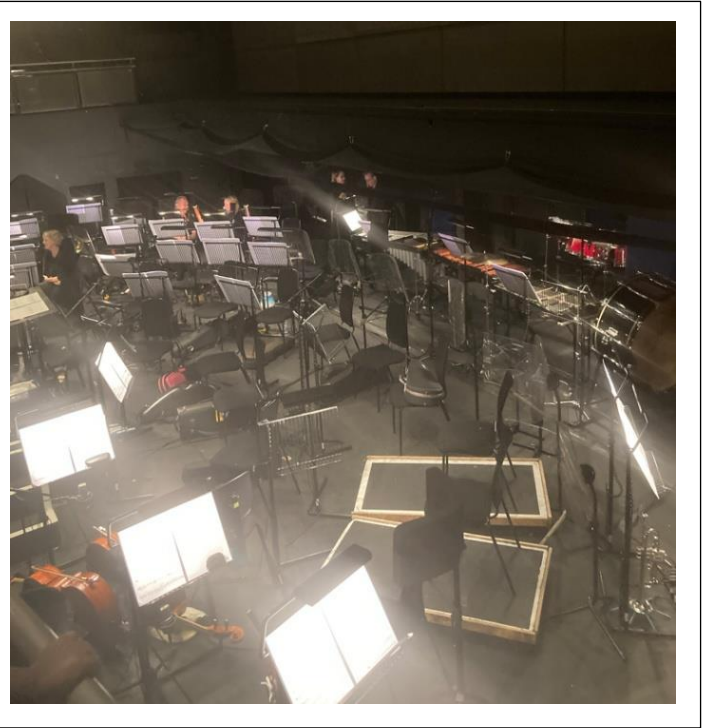


This was an inspirational evening, one of our young people even decided that she would like to be a ballerina and practised her skills during the interval. A carer also commented that being invited to an event that she could also participate.

It was a magical evening of which all who attended thoroughly enjoyed. Our young people were immersed in



the performance and respected the expectations of attending a traditional ballet performance. They carried themselves with grace and dignity, it was an honour to witness and escort them.



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 it possible to raise aspirations for some of our Children and Young People.

We thank you.

# Supplementary and Interim Tuition

66. The Virtual School uses Pupil Premium to supplement education. This is apart from funding devolved to schools. Full time Interim Alternative Provision was put in place in instances while children are awaiting a school place.
67. We place additional focus on all children taking examinations. Supporting children when they need this most is an excellent strategy yielding good results.
68. Below tables show how funding from the National Tuition Programme (NTP) as well as some Pupil premium funding was used towards academic tutoring and mentors.

<b>Table 18: Tuition with no SEN</b>			
Month	Number of pupils	Number of hours	Amount spent
September	3	69	£3,100.00
October	13	269	£12,091.00
November	14	275	£12,338.00
December	7	195	£8,770.00
January	4	78	£3,495.00
February	12	229	£10,307.00
March	13	186	£8,365.00
April	16	293	£13,225.00
May	9	160	£7,240.00
June	3	60	£2,500.00
July	25	184	£8,166.00
August	18	185	£9,334.00
2023-24 YT	137	2182	£98,931.00

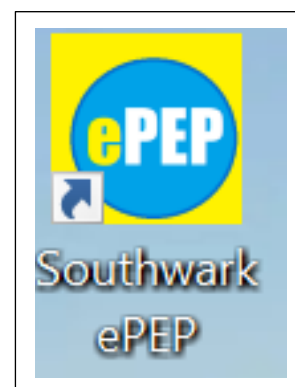
**Table 19: Tuition with SEN**

Month	Number of pupils	Number of hours	Amount spent
September	8	139	£6,250.00
December	14	264	£11,891.00
January	4	59	£2,780.00
February	2	23	£980.00
March	5	104	£4,765.00
April	8	160	£7,585.00
May	14	202	£9,696.00
June	8	150	£7,300.00
July	1	20	£1,000.00
August	2	30	£1,500.00
2023-24 YT	72	1196	£56,123.00

## Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

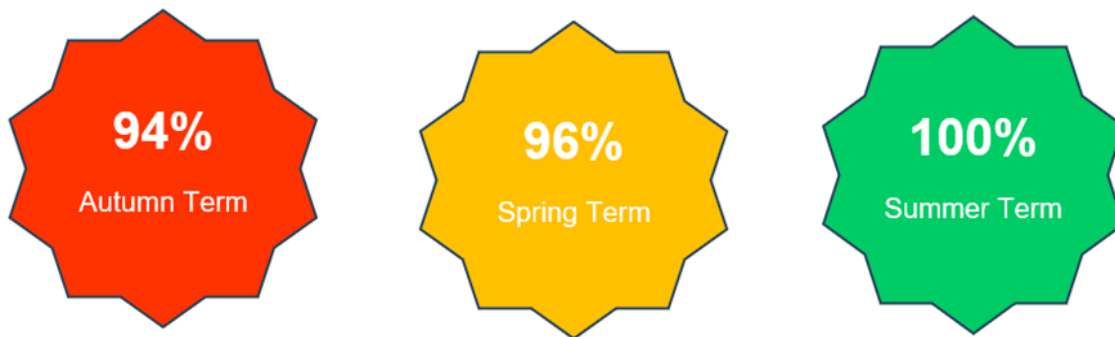
69. PEPs are a key driver in ensuring our pupils receive good quality education provision that is suited to their needs.

70. Each child at stat school age and in KS5 receive Education Planning meetings or reviews each term and have access to an Education Psychologist and Speech and Language therapist and receive bespoke careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG). Review meetings and education meetings will be held on an ad-hoc basis in response to any emerging difficulties or support needs related to education.



71. **The completion figure at our last EPEP window was 100%.** The Southwark PEP performance has steadily improved over the years. the commitment of staff to plan education for all our schildren, the introduction of the ePEP and Social worker and Designated teacher training have all contributed to us reaching our target of 100%.

## 2023 -2024 PEP Completion

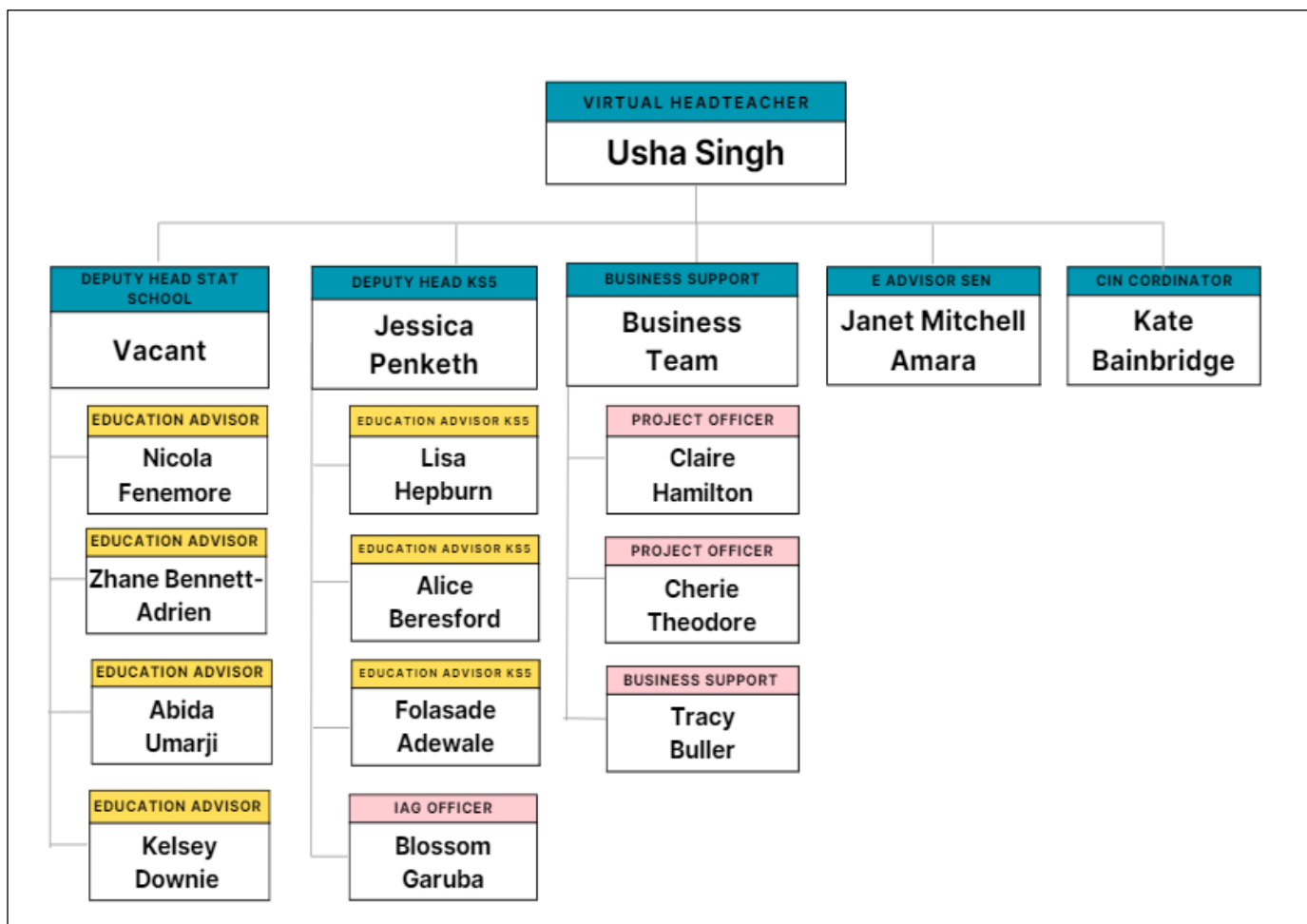


72. ePEP is an electronic PEP system that will ensure:

- Children have their **education progress** electronically tracked, monitored and recorded so the story of their education journey is never lost and moves with the child when placements change and also when we have turnaround in staffing;
- The **'Voice of the Child'** is clearly evident throughout the PEP process;
- Completing the **PEP document is a shared task**. Schools Designated Teachers and Education Advisors all have a chance to contribute to different sections on the ePEP;
- The reporting of **student progress** provides accurate and up-to-date live data;
- There is immediate access to **attainment and attendance data**;
- There is more effective **targeting of the resources**;
- You can see how **Pupil Premium Plus** is used and outcomes;
- Schools can **directly store important documents** related to the child's education.

# Virtual School – Staff Structure

73. The Virtual School in Southwark forms part of the Education Access and Statutory Services division in Children’s and Adults’ Services. The structure of the Virtual School provides a focus on specialist provision at statutory school age and post 16 with more targeted leadership in both sides of the Virtual School.



74. Staff across the Virtual School also lead in some of our key areas of focus and this strengthens our off to children, schools and our Care partners. These areas include: Participation and Engagement (Kelsey and Zhane), Educational Psychology and SALT (Nicola), Tuition (Folashade), ESOL (Alice) and Suspensions/Withdrawal -KS5 (Lisa).

75. In addition to the Virtual School team, we commission services where we have set professionals supporting the work of the Virtual School. These include our Education Psychology service and Speech and Language service.

# Key stage 4

76. Summer 2024 exam grading continued as normal in summer 2024 exam series, following the return to pre-pandemic standards last year.

77. Southwark's 2023-2024 Year 11 cohort comprised 71 children.

- 65 children were in the 12 month plus - SSDA903 cohort.
- 6 children were in care for 12 months or less.
- 58 were entered for GCSE examinations, entry level or functional skills qualifications.

## 78. Southwark's 2023-2024 Year 11 Cohort Information

- 35% of the cohort are recorded as female and 65% male.
- 37% are recorded as having SEN. 24% with an EHCP and 13% SEN support.
- 24% were educated in the borough - in line with inner city London patterns.

Table 20: 23-24 Yr11 cohort		
Gender		
Male	46	65%
Female	25	35%
SEN/EHCP		
SEN Support	9	13%
EHCP	17	24%
Total SEN	26	37%
IN/OUT borough		
In borough	17	24%
Out of borough	54	76%

**Table 21: Ethnicity Breakdown**

	Number	%
Asian/Asian British/Any other Asian Background	5	7%
Asian/Asian British/Bangladeshi	1	1%
Black British	1	1%
Black/Black British/African	13	18%
Black/Black British/Any other Black background	4	6%
Black/Black British/Caribbean	3	4%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups/Any other Mixed background	7	10%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups/White and Black African	3	4%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups/White and Black Caribbean	10	14%
Not disclosed	4	6%
Other Ethnic Groups/Any other ethnic group	5	7%
White/Any other White Background	2	3%
White/British	13	18%

### 79. 12 Months+ in Care - Year 11 Cohort Information

- 65 children were in the 12 month plus - SSDA903 cohort
- 12 months+ in care has been used in statutory guidance as evidence suggests that children who are in care for more than 12 months traditionally perform better than children new to care.

80. 65% of the 12 months+ cohort was male and 35% female. This is significantly different from the cohort last year at 56% and 44% respectively.

81. 43% of children in this cohort were recorded as having SEN with 26% in possession of an EHCP.

<b>Table 22: 2023-2024 Year 11 - 12 Month Plus Cohort</b>		
Gender		
Male	42	65% (56% last year)
Female	23	35% (44% last year)
SEN/EHCP		
SEN Support	11	17%
EHCP	17	26%
Total SEN	28	43%

82. 26% were educated in the borough which is similar to the 2021-22 figures.

<b>Table 23: IN/OUT borough Year 11 - 12 Month Plus Cohort</b>		
In borough	17	26%
Out of borough	48	74%

### **83. Virtual School Offer– Use of Pupil premium Grant for Year 11 Students**

All Virtual School Year 11 students receive enhanced support in their GCSE year so that they are well supported to secure good grades. Additional pupil premium funds have been made available for 'special spends' targeted at promoting both academic achievement and enrichment activity. (See PPG section)



#### 84. Attendance year 11 – 2023 Cohort

The year group with the highest number of persistently absent children in the 2023/24 academic year was the year 11 group. 43% of the GCSE cohort (34 Children) were recorded as persistent absentees before the exams.

85. The rise in persistent absence in this group is largely attributed to embedded behaviours following a period of lockdown where there was no requirement to attend school. The 2022/23 GCSE cohort were the first group to write formal GCSE exams and the 23/24 cohort represent the 2nd group returning to pre-pandemic grading.
86. There were no permanent exclusion recorded in Year 11 last year.
87. A larger than usual group of school refusers emerged in this year group and views of the importance of sitting an exam was variable across the group. SEN sufficiency and securing education featured strongly in this group as did the number on unaccompanied asylum-seeking children coming into care in this age group.
88. Of the 34 children who were persistent:
- Gender is recorded as 12 girls and 22 boys.
  - 12 children have SEN with 9 are on an EHCP and 3 SEN Support
89. Other reasons for persistent absence included
- School refusal
  - Suspensions
  - Change of care placements
  - Illness / medical
90. All children in this group were offered additional tuition.

#### KS4 Attainment information 2023/24

91. Overall, 48% of our children in care in Year 11 achieved a GCSE grade in English and Maths.
92. 23% (16) of the cohort were unaccompanied asylum seeking children. Of these **69% (11) were entered for an exam**. 3 sat an English & Maths exam at GCSE level.
93. **12 Month plus Cohort – 65 Students** - Southwark's 2023/24 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 24.

**Table 24: Achieving a pass in both English and Maths - 12 Month plus Cohort**

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Standard, 9-4			34%	20%	19%	6%
Strong, 9-5	6.5	11	17%	17%	9%	3%

94. Southwark’s 2024 CLA English and maths results for our 12 months plus cohort is plotted against the outcome from previous years in table 25. There is a drop in attainment that correlates when compared to grading methods over the past 6 years. The pandemic grading when teacher grading was applied stands out as years when children excelled academically. This could be attributed to attendance not contributing to attainment in these years.

**Table 25: English and Maths - 12 Month plus Cohort**

Level	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
English Standard, 9-4	24%	26%	34%	34%	30%	17%
English Strong, 9-5	15%	17%	20%	22%	21%	8%
Maths Standard, 9-4	21%	34%	34%	22%	21%	15%
Maths Strong, 9-5	9%	11%	24%	20%	9%	8%

### Attainment of the whole cohort: 71 students

95. Southwark’s 2024 CLA English and maths for the full cohort is plotted on the tables below.

**Table 26: English and Maths**

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
English Standard, 9-4	32%	27%	47%	28%	14%
English Strong, 9-5	26%	16%	17%	20%	7%
Maths Standard, 9-4	13%	27%	17%	20%	14%
Maths Strong, 9-5	7%	20%	15%	8%	7%

96. Children in care 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 27: Achieving a pass in both English and Maths					
	2019	2020	2022	2023	2024
Standard, 9-4		22%	14%	16%	6%
Strong, 9-5	10%	15%	11%	8%	3%

97. Children in care achieving a grade 1-9 in English and maths - for the full cohort is plotted in the table below.

Table 28: Achieved a Grade 1 - 9		
	Number of children	%
English	28	39%
Maths	38	54%

## The Transition Process from Yr 11 to 12

98. Successful transitions from KS4 to KS5 are the result of joined up working between Virtual School KS4 Team, KS5 Team and social workers. These teams work together with children, foster carers and education providers to secure transition to KS5 taking individual students' needs into consideration.
99. Year 11 students are invited to the Key Stage 5 cohort's higher education workshops (please see Key Stage 5 section for more information on the workshops), where they can meet with current year 12 and 13 students, widening participation teams from leading and local universities to find out more about attending university as a care leaver.

# Statutory School Age - Case Studies

## Key Stage 4 Case Studies – Student A

**Student A has enrolled for a Level 2 Animal Care Course** - He attended a special school, then moved to carers outside of London where a new school was found by the Virtual School working collaboratively with SEN teams.

In Year 8, Student A joined a special school, showing abilities of achieving above targets predicted for him. Always motivated, Student A accepted **tuition offered by the Virtual School** and asked for additional support at every opportunity. The Virtual School and care team arranged transport to a work experience opportunity at a farm.

In Year 9, Student A enjoyed caring for animals, especially chickens. At the start of In Year 10, Student A joined a school with an extended curriculum offering GCSEs.

Student A He achieved the **Duke of Edinburgh Bronze** award in July 23. Passed Maths Foundation level 1. Participated in additional Science tuition.

At the end of Year 11, Student A achieved **4 GCSE grades in Maths (4)**, English **Language (2)**, **English Literature (2)** and **Biology (3)** with **3 Bronze awards**.

Student A was 'Runner Up' for the overall Child in Care Award.

## Key Stage 4 Case Studies – Student B

**Student B will be studying Level 3 Music Technology and Production at Southwark College.**

During Year 8, Student B came into care. Despite challenges in his formative years, he was determined to continue attending secondary school, travelling from temporary placements.

Student B consistently accepted supplementary tuition, academic support and pastoral mentoring from the Designated Teacher/Safeguarding Lead and Virtual School. Decisions for funding support with target agreed at Personal Education Plan reviews impacted upon Student B's motivation and aspirations. Collaboration from the network inspired Student B to accept opportunities, express his ambitions and maintain focussed on achieving his projected grades.

Student B achieved **8 GCSE passes in English Language (4), English Literature (4), Maths (4), Combined Science (5,4), History (5), Music (6) and Business Studies (4).**

## Key Stage 4 Case Studies – Student C

**Student C will be studying A levels in Art, Business and Criminology at a school in Southwark.**

Student C's overall progress was good in most subjects, with positive relationships and strong friendships were formed. To reach her full potential the Virtual School advisor consistently recommended focussing on maths and science. Supplementary tuition was arranged with additional summer holiday tuition in August 2023 prior to the start of Year 11.

Student C achieved **English Language (4), English Literature (5), Maths (3), Science (4-4), Geography (3), Music (3), RE (5) and Business Studies (5).**

Student C aspires to be a Criminologist or Art Therapist.

# Destination of 2024 Year 11 Cohort

100. At the end of the academic year 2023/24, over 80% of children in care who completed their GCSE year have a confirmed destination.

101. The table below offers the destination information of 2024 Year 11 children.

<b>Table 29: Destinations</b>			
<b>Student</b>	<b>EHCP/SEN</b>	<b>Borough</b>	<b>Year 11 &gt; 12 destination</b>
1	EHCP	Southwark	London College of Performing Arts
2		Islington	City and Islington College
3		Lewisham	Bromley College
4	EHCP	Waltham Forest	NEET
5		Enfield	Bromley College
6		Southwark	City and Islington College
7	EHCP	Southwark	South Thames College Group
8		Wealden	St.Bede's School
9		Lewisham	NEET
10		Thanet	Broadstairs College
11	EHCP	Waltham Forest	Waltham Forest College
12	SEN (K)	Croydon	Dulwich Riding School Apprenticeship
13		Lambeth	Southbank University Academy 6th Form
14		Croydon	NEET
15		Brent	NEET
16		Leicester	NEET
17	EHCP	Croydon	London South East Colleges – Bexley Campus
18		Croydon	John Ruskin College
19		Lewisham	Bosco College
20		Braintree	Colchester Institute

**Table 29: Destinations**

Student	EHCP/SEN	Borough	Year 11 > 12 destination
21		Greenwich	Bacon's College
22	EHCP	Southwark	Capel Manor College
23		Southwark	St Saviours and St Olaves school
24		Southwark	Southwark College
25	SEN (K)	Southwark	Croydon College
26		Spelthorne	Brooklands Technical College
27		Lewisham	Lewisham College
28		Croydon	Croydon College
29		Southwark	CTK Emmanuel
30		Medway	NEET
31		Southwark	NEET
32		Sutton	City and Westminster College
33		Southwark	CTK Emmanuel
34	SEN (K)	Croydon	Bromley Football Club Academy
35		Redbridge	Marcelona Sport Academy
36	SEN (K)	Newham	Newham College
37		Lewisham	Lewisham College
38		Lambeth	Walworth Academy
39		Southwark	Southwark College
40	SEN (K)	Lewisham	NEET
41	EHCP	Thanet	East Kent College
42	EHCP	Lewisham	NEET
43		Redbridge	NEET
44		Greenwich	Shooter's Hill College

**Table 29: Destinations**

<b>Student</b>	<b>EHCP/SEN</b>	<b>Borough</b>	<b>Year 11 &gt; 12 destination</b>
45		Wandsworth	NEET
46	EHCP	Southwark	Lewisham College
47		Croydon	John Ruskin College
48		Lewisham	Lewisham College
49	SEN (K)	Croydon	Coulsdon College
50	EHCP	Southwark	Shooter's Hill College
51		Southwark	Harris Boys' Academy East Dulwich Sixth Form
52		Southwark	Lambeth College
53		Greenwich	Shooters Hill
54		Lewisham	Lewisham College
55		Southwark	ELAM
56	EHCP	Fenland	Peterborough College
57	EHCP	Bexley	London South East Colleges
58	EHCP	Northumberland	Newcastle College
59	SEN (K)	Maidstone	Teaching Assistant Apprenticeship
60	SEN (K)	Greenwich	London South East Colleges
61	EHCP	Ashford	NEET
62		Croydon	Southwark College
63		Southwark	London College of Beauty Therapy
64		Rochdale	Hopwood Hall
65		North Northamptonshire	SEND Home tuition
66	EHCP	Lewisham	Westminster Kingsway College
67	SEN (K)	Southwark	South Thames College Group



Table 29: Destinations			
Student	EHCP/SEN	Borough	Year 11 > 12 destination
68	EHCP	Bromley	NEET
69	EHCP	Southend on Sea	Writtle College
70		Lewisham	Lewisham College
71		Bexley	North Kent College

## Key Stage 5

102. At year 12 entry, all children in care are allocated a new Education Advisor who will guide them through the two years of Key Stage 5. This advisor will provide support through advocacy, attainment and attendance monitoring, planning for the future, academic guidance and the sourcing of opportunity.

103. The Virtual School establish and maintain strong working relationships with curriculum managers and designated teachers at further education (FE) colleges to stay abreast of new courses starting or assessment/enrolment days. Colleges will also let us know when they are designing and starting courses aimed at NEET young people, for example the LEAP programme at John Ruskin College, YEFE (youth entry to further education) at Lewisham College and Fresh Start at City of Westminster College.

### 104. Breakdown of Education provision of the Key Stage 5 population 2023/24

The following data represents a 'snapshot' in May 2024. 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 30: Year 12 and Yr13 Cohort 2023/24		
Gender		
Male	72	61%
Female	46	39%
SEN/EHCP		
SEN Support	6	5%
EHCP	32	27%

Table 30: Year 12 and Yr13 Cohort 2023/24		
Total SEN	38	32%
IN/OUT borough		
In borough	20	17%
Out of borough	98	83%

105. The table below shows the type of education settings our students in Year 12 and Year 13 attend.

Table 31: Education Setting Type for the Key Stage 5 cohort 2023/24		
Type	Year 12	Year 13
FE college	47%	45%
6th form college	16%	14%
Alternative provision	7%	9%
Training/Employment	0%	0%
Youth Offending Institutions	2%	5%
NEET	28%	27%
No. of Young People	96	22

106. Majority of learners in years 12 and 13 attend a further education (FE) college. FE colleges are popular as they offer vocational courses alongside academic pathways in addition to English for speakers of other languages. Sixth form colleges provide for students wishing to pursue A' levels, in an extension of the school environment.

### 107. Supporting the NEET Cohort

Any young person who is not in education, employment or training (NEET) will have a bespoke action plan. We aim to place young people who come into care in KS5 in an education or training provision with 14 days of the PEP meeting.

108. Throughout the academic year 2023-24 the 17-18 cohort had an EET figure of 70-78%. This figure will vary throughout the year due to an availability of courses, sourcing specialist provision and young people entering and leaving care.

109. Young people who enter care later in the academic year are more likely to be NEET as college places fill up with courses starting the following academic year. Despite FE colleges providing frequent start dates and new ESOL courses, larger numbers of UASC entering care in the latter half of the academic year are likely to be NEET for the remainder of the academic year and will start ESOL courses in September.

110. 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.

### 111. NEET Clinic

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.

### 112. Action Plan

Each young person identified as NEET will have an action plan that is updated and maintained which will detail in chronological order the interventions, the support put in place and opportunities offered to enter education, employment and training.

Table 32: Academic levels of Key Stage 5 cohort 2023/24 - May 2024		
Level	Year 12	Year 13
Entry Level	26	7
Level 1 (L1)	12	3
Level 2 (L2)	14	3
Level 3/ A' Level (L3)	17	3
Employed	0	0
NEET	27 (28%)	6 (27%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>22</b>

113. This table illustrates that most learners in years 12 and 13 are studying at Entry Level (28%). This figure is influenced by the high number of English for speakers of other languages who may be studying English for the first time.

114. Students on L1 and L2 courses will be on a vocational pathway which also include Maths/English GCSE retakes. These courses will often be in the fields of construction, business and IT, health and social care and hair and beauty.

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

116. **A' level Results and Destinations** details A' level/ Level 3 results for exams taken in the 2024 exam series along with destinations for the coming academic year.

Table 33: Key stage 5 > Higher Education destinations 2023/24				
Student	Subject A	Subject B	Subject C	Destination
1	Level 3 Business Extended Diploma - DDD	Level 2 Religious Studies - PASS		City, University of London (Accounting with Finance)
2	BTEC Level 3 Diploma Engineering			University of Birmingham – Business Studies
3	A-Level Economics - B	A-Level English Literature - C	A-Level Psychology - C	University of Northampton - Psychology
4	A-Level Psychology - B	A-Level Business - B	A-Level Economics - B	University of Manchester, Accounting and Finance
5	A-Level Maths	A-Level Physics	A-Level Psychology	Retaking A Levels
6	Level 3 Extended Diploma - Advanced Manufacturing Engineering			Apprenticeship with Cosyseal company.
7	A level Maths - C	A Level Biology- B	A Level Chemistry- B	University of Liverpool - Biomedical Science
8	A Level Maths - B	A Level English Lit - B	A Level Economics - A*	KPMG Degree apprenticeship in Auditing + Masters
9	A Level Art - A	A Level Media - A	A Level Sociology - B	Ravensbourne Art School
10	Level 3 Health and Social Care - DMM			City of London University - BSc Mental Health Nursing
11	Level 3 Performing Arts	GCSE Maths		LCCM BMus Music Performance and Production
12	A Level Biology	A Level Chemistry	A Level Criminology	University of Westminster: BSc Biomedical Science

Table 33: Key stage 5 > Higher Education destinations 2023/24				
Student	Subject A	Subject B	Subject C	Destination
13	Level 3 Engineering			Kingston University - Mechanical Engineering
14	Level 3 Sports Science- D*D*D*			Anglia Ruskin - BSc Paramedic Studies
15	L3 Business			Nottingham Trent University - BA Business and Marketing

### 117. Year 13 A level/ Level 3 Results Summary

Results day 2024 yielded the following headlines:

- A record 14 students will be progressing onto university undergraduate courses or degree level apprenticeships this year.
- 1 student will be progressing onto an undergraduate (+ masters) degree level apprenticeship with KPMG, one of the 'Big 4' leading accounting firms in the world.
- 9 students will be progressing onto a course at their firm choice University.



118. These academic achievements are achieved through the determination shown by our Young People as well as the ongoing collaboration between Education and Social Care and is a testimony to the aspirational values we share.

# Key Stage 5 Case Studies

## Key Stage 5 Case Studies – Student A

Student A will be progressing on to City, University of London to study BSc Mental Health Nursing, following years of hard work at college and her work placement and attending Virtual School Higher Education workshops. Student A has worked incredibly hard to re-sit her maths GCSE in year 12 and achieve D\*MM making her university place on her desired course a reality. Student A has utilised all Virtual School support, including supplementary home tuition to boost her progress and has engaged well in PEP meetings to ensure she is responding to feedback and is aware of how to increase her grades. She has dreams and aspirations of becoming a mental health nurse, inspired mainly by her CareLink Practitioner.

## Key Stage 5 Case Studies – Student B

Student B has achieved A\*BB in A Level Economics, A Level Pure Maths and A Level English Literature and will be starting a degree-level apprenticeship with KPMG, one of the 'Big 4' world leading accounting firms. She has an astounding work ethic, attitude to education and has been committed to her studies throughout her Key Stage 3, 4 and 5 journey with the Virtual School. Student B has engaged wonderfully with Information and Guidance sessions, supplementary tuition and higher education workshops and is always willing to do more to learn and achieve.

## Key Stage 5 Case Studies – Student C

Case Study 3:

Student C has a flair for all things art and design and has achieved AAB in A Level Art, A Level Media and A Level Sociology, securing her spot at Ravensbourne Art School to study BA Fine Art. She has remained consistent in her attitude towards improving her grades and will often go above and beyond to improve her practical work in Art, resulting in some amazing pieces of artwork.

## 119. The Virtual School Higher Education Season, January 2024

Southwark Virtual School is proud of our record of supporting students into university. These are students who have overcome barriers to succeed at the highest level in statutory education and have chosen an academic path as an undergraduate. We are also aware that there are alternative career paths so we will continue to offer guidance on apprenticeships at all levels.



120. In January 2024 we hosted our third season of higher education workshops. We collaborated with the widening participation teams at **University College London (UCL)** and **London Southbank University (LSBU)**, a care leaver currently at Anglia Ruskin University and another care leaver on a degree level apprenticeship to deliver workshops on life in higher education. This year we worked with Notgoingtouni to deliver a bespoke workshop on to explore different types and levels of apprenticeships.

Workshops timeline	
24th January 2024	Workshop 1: Student Finance and accommodation in Higher Education – UCL
31st January 2024	Workshop 2: Will I find anyone like me? Higher Education- Care leavers' experiences
7th February 2024	Workshop 3: Study skills and student support – LSBU
14th February 2024	Workshop 4: Apprenticeships- an alternative to university

## Higher Education Workshop Feedback – 2023/24

“The workshops delivered by the universities (UCL and LSBU) were very informative and helped relieve some of worries I had about University”

***A' level student, year 13***

“I found out a lot about different types of uni accommodation and different societies and groups I can join like the football society”

***Level 3 BTEC student, year 12***

“Hearing from another person who understands what it is like to be care-experienced and that they are enjoying uni life was really helpful”

***A' Level student, year 12***

121. **Pupil Premium at post 16** has been introduced by the DfE following a successful 16+ pupil premium pilot funding initiative. Southwark was selected to participate in the pilot study which has made a significant impact for our KS5 young people.

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

Provision	Description	Outcome
Supplementary tuition	Offer of 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 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.



Provision	Description	Outcome
Training in Schools and Colleges	Trauma informed training aimed at Designated Teachers	Providing Designated Teachers with context, strategies and insight into the complexities of looked after children.
Targeted therapeutic support	Speech and Language Therapy service (SALT) and Education Psychology (EP)service	SALT assessments and EP support to support academic and social progress.

[Section 31 Grant Determination Letter FY 2023-24 for Pupil Premium Plus \(PP+\) post16](#)

## Promoting the Education of Children with a Social Worker

123. From September 2021, the role of Virtual School Headteachers across the country was extended to include taking a 'strategic leadership role in promoting the educational outcomes of children with a social worker and those who have previously had a social worker. In March 2024, the duty was further extended to include championing the attendance, attainment and progress of children in kinship care. Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements virtual school head role extension.
124. To meet these non-statutory duties particularly for children on *child in need (CIN)* and *child protection (CP)* plans, the Virtual School appointed a CIN coordinator from January 2024.
125. There are currently 268 children and young people subject to a CP plan in Southwark and 458 children and young people subject to a CIN plan and 493 including children on CIN within the All Age Disability service (AAD). There are slightly more males than females are on such plans. For CP plans – 53.7% male, 44% female, 1.9% unknown and 0.4% trans female. For CIN plans – 52.9% male, 45.4% female, 1.6% unknown.

### Enhancing partnerships between education settings and local authorities:

126. In 2024, the CIN Coordinator visited a wide range of schools. The visits focussed on: promoting inclusion and understanding of CWSW, strengthening partnership between the Virtual School, Social Care and CAMHS and increasing parent's capacity and ability to engage with education. focus the school on the needs of this cohort. [Evaluation of the extension of virtual school heads' duties to children with a social worker. Phase 2: April 2024](#)

Table 34: Schools visited	
Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
Crawford	South Bank University Academy
Grange	Charter School East Dulwich
Michael Faraday	Harris Academy Bermondsey
Redriff	Charter Bermondsey
Cherry Garden	City of London Academy Southwark
Pilgrim's Way School and Bellenden	SILS
Albion	
Beormund	
Bird in Bush	
St Anthony's Primary (SBAT)	
Lyndhurst	
Summerhouse	
Friars Foundation School	
Dulwich Village Infants School	

**Promoting practice that supports children’s engagement in education, - attending an education setting is an important factor in helping to keep children safe from harm:**

The Virtual School is working closely with the council’s Education Inclusion Team. This has included regular meetings about monitoring school attendance, and it is also planned to include suspension and permanent exclusion data subject to all schools agreeing. The aim of collaboration is to allow for early interventions by the Virtual School and social care teams to keep children in schools. [Working together to improve school attendance](#)

**Making visible the disadvantages that children with a social worker can experience:**

127. The Virtual School is committed to promoting a trauma-informed approach in all our schools to support the inclusion and educational progress of children who have experienced ACEs.

Trauma-informed relational practice:

- creates environments in which all staff can more successfully respond to the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable learners.

- has been proven to reduce suspensions and permanent exclusions which disproportionately affect children who are disadvantaged.
- provides positive incentives for children to attend school as it promotes belonging and listening to the child's voice by emotionally available adults.
- improves pupil outcomes in relation to engagement with learning

128. To achieve these aims the Virtual School has funded membership of the Attachment Research Community (ARC) for all Southwark schools. ARC offers a pathway to becoming a trauma-informed school. The Virtual School aims for all schools to achieve bronze by establishing relational behaviour policies and delivering trauma-informed training for all staff.
129. ARC offers schools a route to trauma-informed status through: an audit tool and matrix with OFSTED criteria, a development planning tool, bronze, silver and gold accreditation and the opportunity to becoming a learning hub.
130. To date 50 schools have signed up to access the full benefits of ARC membership and 21 are completing audits.
131. School leaders and members of the Virtual School attended the ARC London and South East Regional Conference. A number of teachers cascaded Paul Dix's ('when the adults change the children change') talk on relational behaviour practice in their own schools.
132. The Virtual School nominated Beormund School and Harris Bermondsey for the Alex Timpson Award 2024 for Trauma-informed practice and Beormund School has been shortlisted in the Pru/Special school category.

<b>Table 35: Schools and groups signed up to ARC membership through Southwark VS</b>	
Albion Primary	Ilderton Primary
Angel Oak Academy	Judith Kerr Primary School
Ann Bernadt Nursery School	Kintore Way Nursery School
Ark Globe	Linden Lodge School
Bellenden Primary	Lyndhurst Primary School
Beormund Primary school	Maudsley and Bethlem Hospital School
Bird in Bush Primary	Michael Faraday Primary School
Charlotte Sharman primary	Nell Gwynn Nursery School
Charter School Bermondsey	Newlands Academy

**Table 35: Schools and groups signed up to ARC membership through Southwark VS**

Cherry Garden School	Pilgrims' Way
Cherry Orchard Primary School	Redriff Primary School
Cleeve Park School	Rotherhithe Primary School
Crawford Primary School	St Anthony's Primary School
Dog Kennel Hill Primary School	St Mary Magdalene CE Primary School
Dulwich Hamlet Junior School	St. Francis RC Primary School
Dulwich Village C of E Infants' School	StreetVibes Media Academy
Dulwich Wood Primary	Summerhouse Behaviour Support Service
Friars Primary School	Surrey Square Primary School
Goodrich	TCathedral School Of St Saviour & St Mary Overy
Goose Green Primary School	The Charter School East Dulwich
Grange Primary School	Gem Federation: Bessemer & Keyworth Primary
Harris Academy Bermondsey	Tower Bridge, Robert Browning, Snowsfields (The Bridges Federation)
Heber primary school	Urban Mission School
Highshore school	

133. The Virtual School audited a range of CIN and CP plans to identify if educational aspiration was embedded in the plans in the form of clear educational targets.

- 30 plans were audited 7 CP and 23 CIN across school age 5-17 with more focus on exam and transition years.
- The audit revealed that in the notes before CP and CIN reviews there is often personal and detailed feedback which can include elements of academic achievement, attendance, punctuality and behaviour, the identification of health issues that may affect educational progress and the voice of the child.
- Areas for attention were identified as the need for a separate outcome for education including individual educational targets.

134. As a result of this audit the Virtual School has worked with the Education Inclusion Team to deliver training to social workers in autumn 2024. The training is on securing educational targets in CIN and CP plans and attendance.

# Virtual School Priorities 2024/25

135. Persistent absence remains our main priority for the 2024/25 academic year. We aim to strengthen our response to concern around persistent absence. Through targeted casework, data analysis, early intervention and regular multi-agency panels to agree priority actions.
136. We intend to make all Southwark schools attachment aware schools. 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/ permanent exclusions.
137. In relation to the extended duties of the Virtual School Headteacher, we aim 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](#)
138. To strengthen our approach and offering to our children in KS5 through evidenced base use of the new pupil premium funding for Post 16. Offering varied and well-rounded advice to young people on their post-18 destinations education/employment by forging relationships with apprenticeship providers, developing resources on how to apply for apprenticeships and offering workshops on apprenticeships at all levels. This will allow us to target young people taking traditional education routes but also specifically target support to young people who may prefer an alternative to traditional university pathways.

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