

**Virtual School Headteacher's
Annual Report
2022/23**



**Eva Tabaton
Virtual School Headteacher
September 2023**



ROYAL GREENWICH
VIRTUAL SCHOOL

<https://www.virtualschoolgreenwich.org.uk/>



Lego construction, By M (aged 7)

‘Ensuring our children
and young people **thrive**’

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PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to summarise the educational outcomes and attainment of children in our care during the academic year 2022/2023. It considers their achievements and the support provided by the Virtual School, so they are given every opportunity to achieve the best learning outcomes, to explore some of the barriers they continue to face and includes the plans to overcome these. I hope you get from the Annual Report how determined we are to ensure children in our care get the very best experience from their early years providers, schools and Post 16 providers to make sure the best results can be achieved. The Virtual School is very clear that schools also need to ensure that our most vulnerable learners are given every opportunity to succeed. This is not just about equality of opportunity but furthermore, equality of outcome. The report highlights the additional duties that the Virtual School has in raising the profile and offering advice and guidance of previously looked after children, care leavers and children known to Social Care.

HEAD TEACHER'S FOREWORD

I am delighted, as Headteacher of the Virtual School, Royal Borough of Greenwich to be able to write this introduction to my third annual report taking the lead of a dedicated team of officers who are committed to supporting all those involved in meeting the needs of our children in care. The team's contributions, by way of compiling this report, clearly demonstrate the successes and challenges faced this past year and the Virtual School's continued commitment to ensuring that all schools fulfil their responsibilities to the children in our care so that they are given access to the opportunities available to maximise their attainment and achievement. We continue to champion our children in care with the aim being to narrow the gap between our children and their peers.

The start of this new academic year was again characterised in making sure that our children do not have any missed learning opportunities. This remains one of our most strategic priorities and we are working hard on raising attendance figures by sharing data, identifying issues, barriers and providing early intervention. Latest DfE figures reveal that nationally, post pandemic rates of attendance are not improving despite huge focus from schools, local authority officers and politicians; the attendance gap continues to grow.

Following on from last year's re-organisation, this year the Virtual School continues to further develop standards of practice that includes providing officers with new key responsibilities that focus on specific cohorts of children such as core leavers and UAS children (unaccompanied asylum seekers) and, in addition to improving our expertise with exclusions, transitions and EET (education, employment, training). Likewise, our Homework Club which we re-introduced last year continues to thrive and remain an effective resource in closing the gap with missed learning opportunities and promoting the emotional wellbeing of our children in care who attend. Some of the positive activities our children in care experienced this year include participating in celebrating the King's Coronation, fund raising to support the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), day trips to South-eastern coastal areas and two very successful residential visits to a farm in West Sussex where the children in our care were able to participate in a variety of activities such as feeding and taking care of the animals, cooking for one another and hiking on the Sussex Downs.

We want our children and young people to feel happy, safe and secure in their educational settings where they receive an outstanding educational experience that enables them to grow into confident, resilient citizens despite any adversities they may encounter or some of the missed opportunities they may have experienced. We are a very proud team and recognise the incredible achievements of our looked after children who, despite the challenges they may have encountered including the trials of recovering lost learning, have made progress in different areas with some impressive, individual success stories that showcase their many achievements. You will see how we share these successes at our annual Children Awards which you will find detailed in our 'Beyond the Classroom' section of this report.

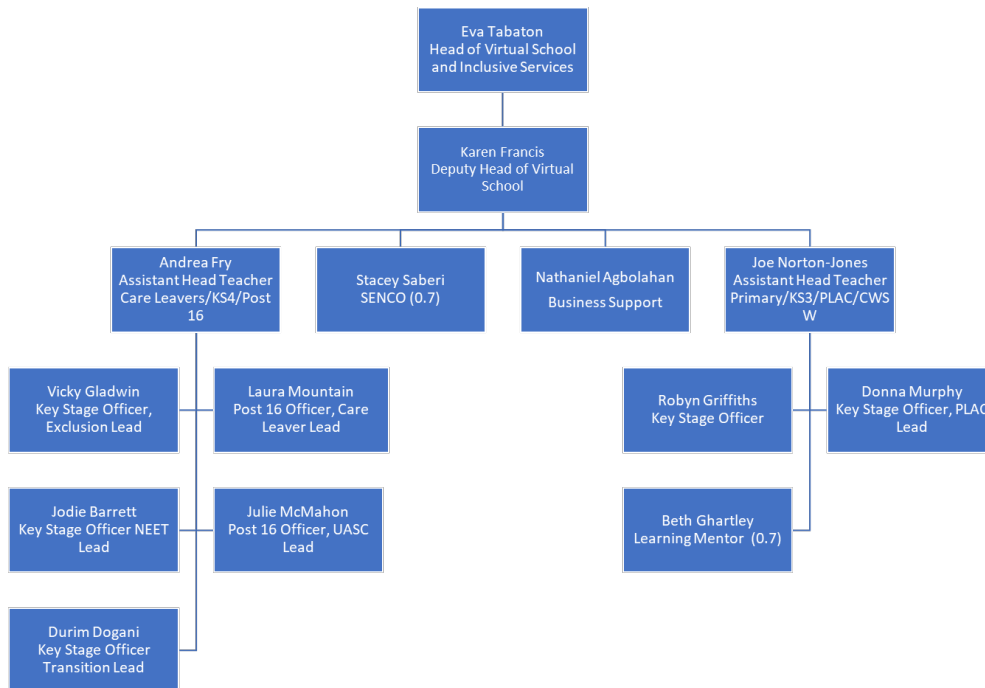
To conclude, we value the wishes and feelings of all children in our care and strive to work with everyone involved by adopting a multi-disciplinary approach to ensure the best possible outcomes for each and every individual as a significant protective factor enabling their voice to be instrumental in the decisions that affect their future goals and aspirations so that they become an integral part of the village that raises them.....

'...It takes a village to raise a child' (African proverb)

Eva Tabaton: Virtual School Headteacher

September 2023

VIRTUAL SCHOOL STRUCTURE



Key stage/Post 16 Officers

Each officer oversees a year group and supports the child throughout their school year closing any learning gaps and ensuring continuance with their emotional well-being. Our officers track and monitor the progress of children in our care in their allocated year groups, co-ordinating and deploying Royal Greenwich support to raise their attainment according to an assessment of their needs. They quality assure education and transition planning for all in their area including supporting carers and social workers to source schools. Officers also support designated teachers, schools, social workers, foster carers and governors and act as advocates by positively challenging the practice of schools.

Educational psychologists

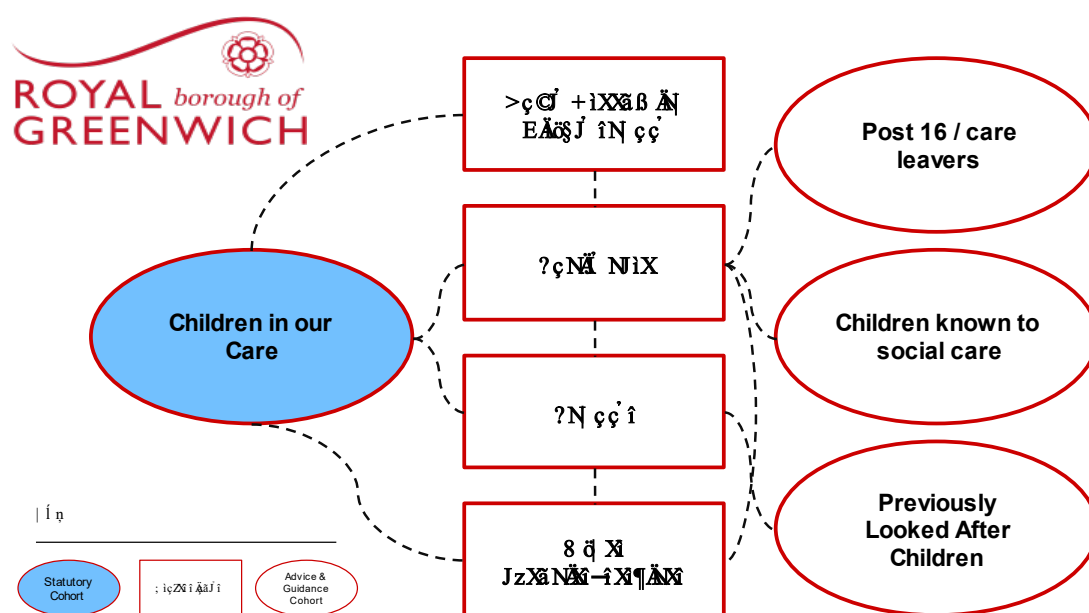
The Virtual School continues to access two educational psychologists (EPs) for one day a week. The use of this service has been developed to meet the ever-changing needs of children in our care and to maximise any gaps with identifying

any additional needs they may have. Their support and expertise are used in a number of ways including consultations. In addition to supporting us with consultation sessions and delivery of training to a range of professionals, EPs are involved in a number of projects supporting some of our most vulnerable young people in care providing us with invaluable observations and consultation.

Reintegration Officers

The Virtual School has access to reintegration officers based in the Secondary Inclusion Service to whom our officers can make referrals to support our children and young people needing more regular provision and input from an adult with experience of supporting children in an educational environment. The diversity of the Reintegration team means referrals can be selected on a basis of the needs of the young person. Reintegration officers may also attend professional meetings alongside Virtual School officers to support decisions made towards improving their outcomes and wellbeing. This helps to provide more robust and supportive feedback to schools and colleagues to enable the child/young person to overcome any barriers to learning that they may be experiencing.

OUR EXTENDED DUTIES



Since 2014, Virtual Schools have had the statutory responsibility to play the corporate parent role for children in our care. This includes being the

educational advocate and to ensure they promote the best educational outcomes for children and young people. This also includes having direct input in some of our children's lives and working with other professionals to overcome the barriers to learning that our children and young people may experience. Key features of the Virtual School are to contribute to increasing the educational performance of children in our care by:

- Raising attainment and accelerating progress for children in care across all key stages.
- Improving school attendance and reducing exclusions.
- Improving the quality of Personal Education Plans (PEPs).
- Providing and supporting a range of opportunities to widen horizons, raise achievement and ensure all young people are in education, employment or training.

In 2018, additional responsibilities were added to the Virtual School's remit to provide advice and guidance for previously looked after children, Post 16 young people in care and care leavers. More recently, these responsibilities have extended to also include children known to social care, as the 2018 CIN review showed that almost 1/10 have had a social worker and those known to social care statistically underperform compared to their peers.¹ The diagram above helps to demonstrate the difference between our core statutory responsibilities and additional responsibilities in providing support and guidance.

Children with a Social Worker (CWSW)

Funding for these duties has been extended enabling the provision of more strategic support for agencies working with children known to social care. This includes more specific intervention whereby inclusive and trauma informed/responsive schools will be in a better position to support all our children as they navigate through the challenges of their education.

The Assistant Headteacher (AHT) for the Virtual school has agreed permanent attendance to the following panels / boards:

- Primary and Secondary Fair Access Panels.
- Pre Mace (formerly known as GRASP).
- Out of Court Disposal Panel.

¹ Review of children in need <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-children-in-need/review-of-children-in-need>

- Pan London CWSW board.
- Inclusive and Nurturing Panel group within the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU).
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) network.
- Mental Health in Schools board.

Rationale

The purpose of attendance to these meetings:

- To learn the context within Royal Greenwich for how the most disadvantaged children are already being helped by local authority officers and services.
- Attendance has created a platform whereby the educational outcomes for the most vulnerable are promoted.

The AHT for the Virtual School is the only local authority representative to attend all of these panels. It is evident that there are areas of great strength and opportunity for the Virtual School to directly impact on best practise. We continue to further develop professional networks with a wide range of partners including health services, Youth Justice Service, Families and Adolescent Support Service (FaASS) and within the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU).

Case Management

Being one of the most important protective factors for young persons, case management is done through collaboration with schools' attendance at fair access panels, attendance in person and virtually to core group meetings, key strategic meetings and CP/CIN meetings. Whilst not solely dependent upon such, interventions and support must come from or be directed by, the Virtual School when no other educational expertise is being provided to the network. This ensures that children with a social worker are not lost in the system.

Data and attendance tracking

We have on (mean) average 217 children on a Child Protection plan and 262 on a Child in Need plan at the end of July '23. Much of the support we offer is in the build-up to social care involvement. Schools will often flag children they are concerned about (or are doing MASH referrals for) to the Virtual School for advice and guidance pre- assessment.

Attendance tracking for children with a social worker is an important measure of impact. Studybugs, a database system that allows officers to access real-time school attendance data, is being used by the Virtual School for all children known to Social Care. This tool can be used by social workers, FaASS, youth justice officers and Virtual School staff to develop their own 'cohorts' of vulnerable children whereby attendance can be noted and challenged on the day rather than waiting for attendance returns at end of week, term or academic year. The Virtual School will be a considerable support in setting this up with social worker/youth justice to ensure coverage for children moving between services. Training for all Virtual School staff is booked for early September 2023.

Our '**Ever 6**' refers to data for children we are tracking. These are children we are tracking who have been known to social care in the last six years. Instead of looking back from now to six years ago we are tracking children known to social care in Greenwich from 1st September 2022. This will form our first 'Ever 6 cohort'. Over time, we will create a working historical document tracking progress and outcomes for children and young people who have been known to social care.

Training

Since September 2022, we have delivered training to over 100 local authority employed staff involved with children with a social worker or children in our care. The plan is to link in with the Social Care Practice Academy to ensure that every social worker attends training from the Virtual School at least on an annual basis, either on Trauma Informed Practice or best practice around attendance, suspensions, behaviour for learning, and promoting great academic outcomes for young people. Moreover, we are also developing a bespoke training offer for student social workers, newly qualified social workers or new to borough social workers which will form part of their induction offer.

Our Virtual Reality Trauma (VRT) headset training offer started in February 2023 which has been delivered to staff at a number of Royal Greenwich schools and our Primary Inclusion Service. It also promotes the extended duties of the Virtual School. Training for Plumstead Manor is starting from September 2023 specific to 'Trauma in the Adolescent Brain'. The VRY headsets are also to be presented to service leaders at FaASS, foster carers, supervising social workers and a growing list of schools over the rest of 2023. Further training offers from KCA (a service that delivers drug, alcohol and mental health services) include 'Attachment, Trauma and Resilience: Identity and narrative' which was delivered to all Inclusion staff in April 2023. We also have taken into account the context

of how Royal Greenwich schools link in with identity issues for both children/families and professionals. Of particular concern are non-white children in our care being placed in all white families/schools out of borough.

In collaboration with KCA, a whole school 'Maintaining Staff Resilience in a Time of Collective Adversity' training offer has been produced. Following feedback from Headteachers, this addresses the collective emotional stress some staff experienced during COVID teaching time and aims to support adults who are working with traumatised people and may find that they are affected by secondary trauma. For 2023/24 we will focus on developing a training offer to ensure all our schools in Royal Greenwich are trauma informed responsive to the needs of children and young people who have experienced trauma.

Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)

The rationale is to support schools with recognising who their PLAC are and how to ensure funding (£2530 for 2023/24) for these children is secured. Training and resources for all schools has been provided at the start of 2022/23 to encourage schools to promote the needs of PLAC, to ensure schools are made aware if they have PLAC children and young people and to record this on the October census. We will be sending out further information in September to schools through the Children's Service Schools' e-Bulletin about claiming this additional funding. We also offer a pathway for schools to approach the Virtual School to talk through specific cases where PLAC are in need of additional support. We provide guidance and signposting to relevant organisations for any child that is up to three year post-adoption from Royal Borough of Greenwich or who are currently residing in Royal Borough of Greenwich. We have worked closely with children and young people's parents and guardians to identify good or outstanding schools that are able to understand children's needs. Once a school has been identified we have liaised with School Admissions to ensure that their first preference school is offered with the parent or guardian's consent. The school is contacted to ensure that they have all the relevant information to support the best transition possible. In October 2022 there were **218** children registered as being PLAC, in January 2023 this number increased to **235** and in May 2023 the number had increased further to **237**. During the year, information was provided and social workers, schools, parents and guardians were signposted with additional advice and guidance.

Post 16/Carer Leavers

During the 2022/23 academic year our Virtual School has looked at our current offer for Post 16/carer leavers and updated accordingly. We are currently available to any young adult aged 18-25 for advice and guidance with regards to their education which can range from university applications, course enquires and finance support. As we know, when a young person turns 18, many still require support from their adults so this is an area of focus across Children's Services to ensure our care leavers have access to a more enhanced offer of support, enabling them to continue to succeed and move forward into adulthood. At the end of Year 13, in the final Personal Education Plan (PEP), we have ensured that all young people know they can contact us anytime up until the age of 25. For those who start university we touch base throughout the first year to ensure that they have settled and have no concerns with which we can help. We often receive enquiries from young adults post-18 who want to re-engage in education and need further support or have queries about applying for university later in life. In addition, we have also undertaken training to expand our knowledge on how we can best support and advise on issues such as universal credit and housing pathways. As of September 2023, we have **595** care leavers (post completing Year 13 students) aged 18-25 who can contact us for advice and guidance.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker (UAS) CHILDREN

We have approximately **26** children and young people in our care who are unaccompanied asylum seekers. As a school we try to ensure that children are matched wherever possible to attend schools with children who may be from the same country of origin. This is something we also take into consideration when placing out of borough UAS children into Royal Greenwich schools. We now have an allocated UAS Children's Officer who has a clearer understanding of the processes and hurdles faced by unaccompanied asylum seeker children and refugees. The ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) new in care will have an initial PEP and an ESOL pack which will be sent to the allocated social worker as soon as Virtual School is made aware. If required, the UAS Children's Officer will forward the information regarding the Flash Academy English tutorials. Support will be given to the keyworker/social worker to find suitable education near to the placement, as a priority. The Virtual School will use funding streams that are available to access suitable mentoring/counselling, if required through the appropriate channels of support and charities. At the

PEP meetings it is important for us to gather the pupil's voice via an interpreter (social worker to arrange this). The UAS Children's Officer will collate other opportunities that are available and put together a directory of the support available, charity contact details, extra curriculum ideas and making connections with other boroughs who have been working with the UAS children cohort. It is the intention to bring together new ideas and support plans that will be effective and enable the young person to flourish. The UAS Children's Officer will work closely with the UAS Children's team to have a smooth support plan in place and work together to make sure there are no gaps whilst the young person is accessing education/training. The new UAS Children Tracker will provide easy access of data/support offered to the cohort.

KEY STRENGTHS

This section of the report provides a summary of the Virtual School key highlights:

- We have a total of 20 care leavers currently at university over a three-year period with seven having started in September 2022.
- Despite ongoing challenges with attendance, our overall attendance for all our school aged children was 90.5%.
- Joined up working with the Secondary Inclusion Service has improved this year particularly the sharing of information on how best to support young people by knowing what has already been tried and identifying the needs to be further addressed.
- In addition to PEP/Annual Reviews, numerous professional and strategy meetings were attended for our most vulnerable and at-risk young people. This meant that Virtual School were fully up to date with each case, were able to plan education accordingly thereby providing an opportunity to challenge decisions being made for our young people.
- We launched our new website Royal Greenwich Virtual School to reach more of our children, care leavers and colleagues to provide further guidance and support. This included a new logo. <https://www.virtualschoolgreenwich.org.uk/>
- The Virtual School had three appeals upheld to obtain a school placement whereby a school had initially refused to admit a child in our care because they were no vacancies in the relevant year group. This meant less time out of school for these children and the opportunity to have access to a good or outstanding education setting.

- The Virtual School delivered training to designated teachers, social workers, school governors, and foster carers to further support understanding on attendance, trauma informed and responsive approaches.
- A total of 99% of PEPs were completed in the six month allocated time frame for children of statutory school age, 93% termly. For our Post 16 young people, 90% were completed in the six month time frame, 85% termly during 2022-2023.
- Over 100 children in our care have been nominated by social workers and Virtual School staff for awards to be celebrated on 6th October 2023.
- Three of our children were nominated and received a High Sheriff's Award in November 2022.
- Two of our children were nominated and received a Shining Star Award for their achievements celebrated at London Guildhall.
- The Virtual School established a multidisciplinary Management Board in September 2022. The board has been supportive and raised high expectations of our children and young people's progress and continued to explore the barriers they face and what can further be implemented to help them overcome these.
- Four of our children and young people who attend our weekly homework club presented at a full Cabinet meeting to talk about their experiences of being in care.
- We were able to run our weekly homework club throughout the academic year for up to 30 children and young people in our care which included celebrating key events over the year including children's birthdays, the King's coronation and raising funds for the RNLI charity. In addition, one of our UAS children has started to attend our club.
- One of our children in care completed their work experience with our Virtual School.
- Members of our team took part in our first ever school journey. 20 children attended for a two week period and it was a massive success.
- One young person appeared in the Guardian newspaper regarding a story of potential most inspiring women of the future. This was celebrated and well deserved.

Challenges 2021/22

- One of the biggest challenges this year has been lack of attendance within cohorts due to a variety of reasons which include placement breakdowns, missing episodes, mental health and anxiety. Further support strategies have included providing support by completing home visits, attending professions/strategy meetings, referrals for tuition, referrals for counselling, CAMHS and using alternative educational settings.
- Lack of foster placements/residential with education remains a challenge for Children's Services but this is not just a Royal Greenwich issue, it is nationwide.
- Completion and submission of good quality PEPs only from some schools despite the offers of designated teacher training and personal visits. Pupil Voice forms are not always available for discussion at the PEP meetings.
- Lack of school placements and schools not offering places, despite looked after children to be given priority for placements, this has forced schools to go over PAN.

CONTEXTUAL DATA

As a Virtual School we are constantly adapting and trying to adjust to the needs that arise to not only support our children but also colleagues across Children Service's. It is also important that we take into consideration our contextual demographic which will have a bearing of the needs of the children we support. The Royal Borough of Greenwich is one of the largest of the 33 London boroughs with an area of 4,733 hectares and 13 kilometres of Thames river frontage. The borough has a rich heritage set in its maritime and military past, largely associated with the river and more recently as an industrial centre at the Royal Arsenal.

Royal Greenwich is one of 12 boroughs that make up the London Thames Gateway, the UK's largest regeneration area. Predominantly sub-urban in character, Royal Greenwich comprises three main town centres: Greenwich, Charlton and Eltham. The borough has a population of 289,000 as reported by the by the Greater London Authority (GLA) in 2020. Approximately 65,000 (22%) of the population are aged 0 to 17. Like most London boroughs, Royal Greenwich is not a homogenous borough and there is significant variation in affluence across the borough and between wards. Across the borough, it is estimated that 38% of households have an income under £25k (a common

measure of relative poverty). 1 in 4 children residing in parts of Woolwich are living in poverty, compared to 1 in 10 in parts of Eltham.

Our children

69% of pupils from non White British backgrounds

34% of pupils with English as their second language



c.66,000 children and young people aged 0-17

17% of pupils with SEND

26% of pupils eligible for Free School Meals



Over 120 languages spoken by pupils

The place

23 Children's Centres aligned with Health Visiting teams



12 libraries in the Royal Borough

4 youth hubs delivered by Young Greenwich



55 parks and open spaces,
20 with playgrounds and
14 with outdoor gyms

94% of schools are good or outstanding (June 23)

The number of children in our care over the last four years varies between 470-500 at any given time. Our rate of children in care is slightly lower than national

average, but significantly higher than regional averages. The number of children coming into care later in their lives and with some significant complexities for example, being at risk of exclusion before entering care, has meant officers have additional challenges in securing outstanding or good provision for them. It has also impacted on our children's engagement with their education.

Our number of statutory age children in our care is reducing slightly year-on-year. However, the numbers in both Post 16 and ages 18-25 are increasing. Some of the needs of our children and young people who have come into care later have had significant issues with some on the verge of exclusion from their mainstream school. The complexity of some children can also make barriers within the school environments even more challenging for our officers to support.

As a school, we continue to notice a rising need of children in our care having a varying range of complexities which has created further challenges in their placements and then potentially, with their school allocation. Our cohort of young people with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan is approximately 28% and 25% of those at SEND support level (up 5% from last year). Therefore, over half of our cohort have a recognised or diagnosed special need.

We strive to ensure the children in our care have access to educational settings that will best meet their needs which is why 95% (up 3% from last year) of our children who attend schools are considered by Ofsted to be good or outstanding schools (the remainder have either secured places in settings according to their needs or are being actively tracked to ensure an appropriate education place is identified).

We also need to consider the number of looked after children from other local authorities that attend Royal Greenwich schools and how this can impact on capacity and the resources needed to support any requirements they may have. When children in care from other local authorities come into our borough, we still aim to ensure that they have access to the best possible education and support that we offer to our own children. This is something that we feel is special about Royal Greenwich.

The number of our children who have been in care over the last two academic years, despite the total of children and young people (including statutory school aged and those up to 25) add up to 550 at the time the data was captured in July '23. There are a number of our children and young people who come into care for a short period of time, having had one or two placements before returning to their families. These cases still take up a considerable amount of officer time

and input whilst we attempt to support and hold them during this period of instability.



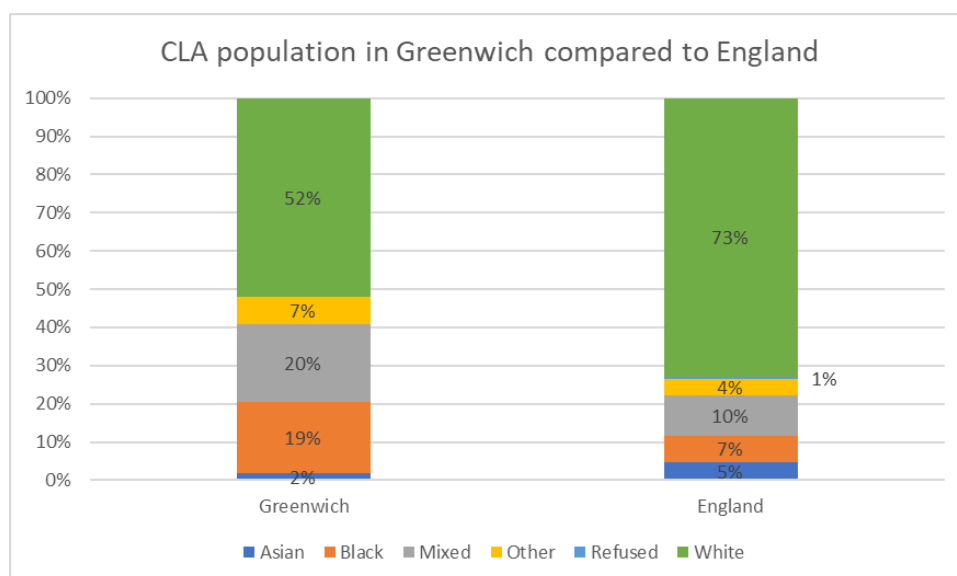
Our young people at Jamie's farm July' 23

Children in our care by ethnicity

Ethnicity in Royal Greenwich compared to England and London, White children make up the largest proportion of children in care, but the percentage is much higher nationally. The proportions are quite different probably due to the diverse demographic representation of the whole population of these areas, Royal Greenwich sits between England and London.

The ethnic composition of children in our care has remained stable over the past few years both in Greenwich and England. Greenwich has a higher proportion of Black and mixed ethnic groups in care compared to England which has a far higher proportion of White children in care. Shown in Chart 1a below.

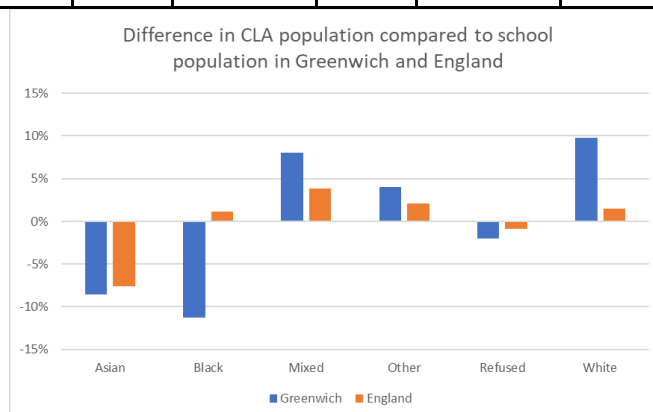
Chart 1a – Percentage of children in care – from DfE Statutory return



Many of the demographic differences between the Royal Greenwich and England care population is due to the overall different populations. When comparing the difference in care populations compared to school populations, as evidenced the Black group is much more underrepresented in care in Royal Greenwich compared to England and the White group being overrepresented. Shown in Chart 1b below:

Chart 1b – Difference in care population compared to school population in Greenwich and England

All CiOC - No. of years in Care	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0-2 years	337	45%	291	34%	257	29%
3-5 years	159	21%	237	28%	236	27%
6-9 years	146	20%	167	20%	208	24%
10+ years	101	14%	152	18%	181	21%
Total in cohort	743	100%	847	100%	882	100%



Number of years in care

The table below shows the length of time our children have been in our care and the increased number of children and young people who have been with us for over 10 years. This will have an impact on the number of carer placements available and the likelihood is these children will continue to remain in our care.

Table 2 – Length of time in our care

All CiOC - No. of years in Care	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0-2 years	337	45%	291	34%	257	29%
3-5 years	159	21%	237	28%	236	27%
6-9 years	146	20%	167	20%	208	24%
10+ years	101	14%	152	18%	181	21%
Total in cohort	743	100%	847	100%	882	100%

Location of placements

As the chart and graph below show, just under a third of children and young people in our care are residing in our borough. Kent has the second highest number of our children resident, followed by Lewisham and then Bexley. A number of our children are placed as far as Scotland, South Yorkshire and Shropshire. This is due to our team commissioning suitable accommodation to meet the needs of all our children particularly with some having more specialist needs. Despite this, our officers will endeavour to visit our children and ensure that local services are offered to support when needed.

When our children are in borough, we have a range of services and support to hand that helps to further develop their education and, in turn, their placement. As children in our care move further out of borough this will sometimes impact on what services they are able to access. We acknowledge that this is a factor we are continually trying to further improve with regard to providing all our children in our care with an equitable offer of support and provision. The table below reflects the known boroughs in which our children and young people of statutory school age have resided during 2022/23. The additional number of children will be those who were placed in our care even if for only a short period of time and then returned to their families, again highlighting the fragility of some of our families.

Table 3 – Which local authority our children in care reside

Home borough	N. CiOC	% CiOC
Greenwich	179	32%
Kent	140	25%
Lewisham	48	8%
Bexley	41	7%
Croydon	28	5%
Essex	10	2%
Southwark	10	2%
Lambeth	9	2%
Bromley	8	1%
Newham	8	1%
Medway	7	1%
Others (5 and below)	78	14%

Number of placements

The table below shows that most of our children have either no or one to two placement moves across the academic year. This shows the consistency of carers and provision in place for our children. When one of our children have to move, the network meet to look at ways to support this transition so as to have the least negative impact.

Table 4 – Number of placement moves since coming into our care

All CiOC - N. Placements	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
No Placements	236	32%	635	75%	392	44%
1-2 Placements	471	63%	189	22%	451	51%
3-5 Placements	34	5%	19	2%	39	4%
6-9 Placements	2	0%	4	0%	0	0%
10+ Placements	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total in cohort	743	100%	847	100%	882	100%

ATTAINMENT & PROGRESS

Part of our Virtual School yearly cycle is to have three assessment days where we review, with support from the schools, where our children attend and what progress they are making. This progress is measured and benchmarked to their last assessment and, if they have made progress it is not compared to national standards. This gives us a chance to see what additional support they will need to help close any gaps they may have. Our internal data shows that the vast majority of children in our care continue to make progress throughout the academic year. This is monitored by the children's allocated officers and reviewed as part of their termly Personal Education Plan (PEP). We do this to ensure that additional funding is used to address the progress our children may be making. What we do know is that once, being in our care, the majority of children will make progress even if it is not in line with their peers.

The table below covers the KPIs for the whole primary phase. The numbers may be smaller than the tracker as the data relates only to those pupils that count within the statistical² cohort.

Table 5 – Attainment of Primary Phase CiOC

Primary Phase Attainment Statistical Cohort	Greenwich 2022	Greenwich 2023	2023 Eng CLA	2023 Eng All pupils
EYFSP N. Pupils	6	-	-	-
EYFSP GLD	66.70%	-	-	67%
Yr. 1 Phonics N. Pupils	4	7	-	-
Yr. 1 Phonics Screening Check	50%	71.4%	61%	79%
KS1 N. Pupils	12	4	-	-
KS1 Reading Exp+	41.7%	50%	46%	68%
KS1 Reading GDS	16.7%	0%	6%	19%
KS1 Writing Exp+	33.3%	50%	35%	60%
KS1 Writing GDS	8.3%	0%	2%	8%
KS1 Maths Exp+	58.3%	25%	46%	71%
KS1 Maths GDS	8.3%	0%	5%	16%
KS2 N. Pupils	19	17	-	-
KS2 RWM Exp+	21.1%	52.9%	36%	59%
KS2 RWM High	5.3%	5.9%	2%	8%
KS2 Reading Exp+	57.9%	76.5%	53%	73%
KS2 Reading High	10.5%	11.8%	16%	29%
KS2 Writing Exp+	36.8%	52.9%	47%	71%
KS2 Writing GDS	5.3%	5.9%	4%	13%
KS2 Maths Exp+	31.6%	70.6%	50%	73%
KS2 Maths GDS	5.3%	5.9%	8%	24%

Progression from Reception to Year 1

Of the six children within the year group, two (40%) are currently working at age-related expectations and four (60%) are working towards age-related expectations. Of this cohort all have SEN, one has an EHC plan and two are working towards an EHC plan needs assessment.

Year 1 phonics screening

Of the 14 children in the Year 1 cohort, seven were at age-expected, two were disapplied due to their learning need. Three children from the Year 1

² The DfE have a specific basis on which pupils are counted in official figures for children in care. It only includes pupils who were in care on 31st March in the year leading up to summer assessments AND had been in care for 12 months or more continuously.

cohort were assessed as working towards, having not achieved the minimum score of 32 out of 40 to pass. For those children who were not at the expected level, this had been identified earlier in the year and during their PEP meetings additional support was agreed to help them close the gap before the start of them moving to Year 2. Those who were below threshold or not entered for screening had been identified earlier in the year as in need of additional support and this will continue into Year 2 to support them up until when they are re-assessed at the end of Year 2. Seven of the 14 Year 1 pupils count within the phonics statistical cohort. Of these seven, five (71.4%) achieved the expected level in phonics, which is below the England all pupil average but ten percentage points above the provisional England children in care average.

Year 2 SATs

Of the six children in our care in Year 2, 50% achieved their expected level in writing and reading which is above the provisional England children in care average. Maths was at 25% which is significantly below England. A number of our children have a recognised SEN, including Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and one has a hearing difficulty. Gaps in knowledge have been identified and interventions are being put in place to support close gaps in Year 3.

Year 6 SATs

There are currently 25 children in the Year 6 cohort at the end of the academic year 2022/23. Of the 17 children in our statistical cohort, 57.9% achieved expected, in reading, this is over 20 percent above the provisional England children in care average and above England for all. Writing is at 52.9% for expected, which is above England for children in care but below national for all. Maths is at 70.6% for expected, which is again over 20% above the percentage for England for children in care but just below national for all.

Of those 19 we have reported data for, of these, eight have an EHCP and one child is being assessed as pre KSI levels due to their significant learning difficulties. Much additional tuition using pupil premium funding and the funding from the National Tutoring Program (NTP) has been put in place for this cohort which has helped to support closing gaps and enabled such good results this year.

Year 11

There are 52 young people in Year 11. Of these, 18 have an EHCP and 10 are registered as SEN support which can make accessing mainstream education and exams more challenging. This is an increase from last year, where there were 12 and eight respectively. We also have two young people who came

into care in Year 10 and were already disengaged from school being at the point of exclusion. Three young people were unaccompanied asylum seekers and not entered for their GCSEs.

Of all our Year 11 young people, 44 were entered into GCSEs. Of those, nine achieved Level 4+ combined English and Maths. Our statutory cohort this year was 36. Out of this cohort three did not sit English and maths GCSEs, however they did gain other qualifications in option subjects and vocational courses. Seven achieved Level 4+ achieved English and maths combined.

The national picture for GCSE results are predicted to be lower this year in comparison to the last three years. Post-pandemic marking has this year gone back to pre-pandemic levelling.

Table 6 – GCSE English and maths for children in our care

KS4 Outcomes 2023	N. Pupils	% Pupils	Stat cohort	Stat cohort %
N. Pupils	52	100%	36	100%
No Results	4	8%	13	36%
Did not sit exams (Core Subjects)	8	15%	3	8%
4+ Eng	18	35%	14	39%
4+ Maths	11	21%	9	25%
4+ Eng & Maths	9	17%	7	19%
5+ Eng	10	19%	7	19%
5+ Maths	8	15%	7	19%
5+ Eng & Maths	4	8%	3	8%
5 or more 9-1 pass	28	54%	5	14%

Overall, the number of our young people achieving combined Level 5+ is still far below national average. We are continuing to develop support for this cohort

and exploring different pathways to enable them to remain in education, employment or training.

Destinations for our young people are currently being explored and officers are further providing support by ensuring they are EET (in education, employment, training). Currently, there are 25 young people who have placements confirmed for September. Apprenticeships have been secured for three young people for the new academic year.

In conclusion, there were a number of factors that contributed to these results including poor mental health, changes to placement and the high number of educational settings that our young people have attended during their school journey.

Year 11 Success Stories

Child A had an extremely difficult year having barely sat any mock exams due to anxiety and fear of failure. His mental health had been very fragile at points and although he was generally attending school, was finding it difficult to remain in lessons and engage. He had a placement break down in his long term placement and was staying with a family friend for a period of time in Year 11. He managed to attend all of his exams and attained grade 5's in English, 4/3 in Science. He has shown extreme resilience and courage to achieve this.

Child B had barely attended school throughout Year 11 including multiple placement breakdowns in Year 10 and she really struggled at a Pupil Referral Unit. She has difficulty with managing her anxiety and can find certain situations overwhelming. However, showing rigid determination she sat her core exams and attained a GCSE 3 in Maths and 1 in English. The network are so proud of her for sitting the exams as this, in itself was a huge challenge for her. Given the amount of lesson content she missed, to achieve a grade 3 in Maths is exceptional.

Table 7 – Attainment of Secondary Phase CiOC*

Secondary Phase Attainment Statistical Cohort	2022	2023	2023 Eng CLA	2023 Eng All pupils
KS4 N. Pupils	31	15	-	-
Average A8 Score	25.1	28.2	24.8	46.5
Average P8 Score	-0.97	-1.17	-1.07	0.00

Average English Attainment Score	5.9	6.6	5.5	9.9
Average Maths Attainment Score	4.8	6.1	5.1	9.1

*Data for this table would not be available until late in October.



Art sketch by H (aged 16 years)

FURTHER & HIGHER EDUCATION

Year 12

In total there have been 64 young people in care in Year 12 over the course of the academic year. The NEET (not in education, employment or training) cohort at the end of year was 13 young people, towards the last term five young people had left their provisions pending new arrangements. Approximately 80% of this cohort are EET which is line with last year's Year 12 cohort. Out of the 64 Year 12 cohort, 12 have been recorded to have additional needs/EHC plan. There are two young people that are NEET with EHC plan.

There is a possibility of 10 young people that will apply for university 2024, and this will be looked at during September/October Term 2023. These young people are on track to succeed their goals and have done exceptionally well with their studies, they continue to thrive and will be encouraged every step of the way. Support of the application process and any targets/actions will be discussed throughout Year 13.

Table 8 – Destinations for Year 12 children 2022/23

Destination for POST YEAR 12	No.
Apprenticeship	3
Custody	0
Employment	0
NEET	13
Traineeship	2
SIXTH FORM-College	23
Unknown – Left Care	4
Pending NEET	5
Specialist SEND Provision	4
ESOL College	7
TOTAL	64

Year 13

In total, over the course of the academic year there have been 93 young people in care in Year 13, at the end of the year the total number still in care is 78. Of the 78 children in our care in Year 13, we had a number of young people on different pathways. A small proportion completed A-Levels, of those five achieving a pass grade and with almost half obtaining a B grade. Over 25% of our Year 13's were undertaking BTEC qualifications with the majority either gaining a pass grade or going on with their education. This year, 47% of our young people are continuing in education beyond Year 13, either by attending college or university. Eight out of the nine that applied for university were offered a place at their first choice university. All ESOL (UAS children) that passed are continuing in education for another year. Improving results is an ongoing priority to help improve outcomes for our young people. We are working with colleagues across Children's Services as part of Task and Finish Group to develop a tailored package of support and potential pathways to increase opportunities for our Post 16 young people. This will eventually mean pathways for our children will start as early as Year 9 making their education more meaningful. Our Post 16 team will continue to arrange and further increase participation events, particularly in vocational areas so all young people can participate, the focus not just being given to the higher achievers and university applicants.

Table 9 – A level results

Qualification Type	N. Pupils	B	C	D	E	TBC
A level	6	5	2	2	2	1
Cumulative %	6	45%	64%	82%	100%	-

Table 10 – BTEC results

Qualification Type	N. Pupils	Dist*	Dist	DDM	Merit	MMP	Pass	TBC	Continuing
BTEC 1	9						7	1	1
BTEC 2	5		1		1		1	2	
BTEC 3	11	2	2	1	5	1		2	1
All BTEC Cumulative %	25	10%	24%	29%	57%	62%	100%	-	-

Table 11 – Apprenticeships, ESOL and SEN courses

Qualification Type	N. Pupils	Pass	Fail	Continuing
Apprenticeship	5	1		4
ESOL	13	11	2	11
SEN Course	6	5		1

Table 12 – Other qualifications

Qualification Type	N. Pupils	TBC
PEZ	1	1
Traineeship	1	1

Below are the predicted destinations of our Year 13 cohort for next academic year. It is subject to change as some students have yet to receive a confirmed offer.

Table 13 – Destinations for Year 13 children 2023/24

Destination	N. Pupils	%
Apprenticeship	3	4%
College	30	38%
Custody	1	1%
Employment	1	1%

Gap year	1	1%
NEET	23	29%
Seeking employment	3	4%
Uni pending	1	1%
University	6	8%
University equivalent course	1	1%
Unknown	8	10%
TOTAL	78	100%

YEAR 13 Success Stories

Child C experienced some ups and downs with her mental health and anxiety which affected her attendance throughout Post 16. Despite these challenges, she managed to catch up with missed work going on to achieve a Distinction in Health Social BTEC, B in Sociology, C in Psychology at A level and accepted into her first choice university.

Child D came into care in the spring term of Year 12. He achieved well previously at GCSEs (10 grade 5-8) and successfully enrolled at sixth form to take three A levels. Unfortunately, due to mental health issues he was unable to complete or further commit to his education and due to his anxiety, his attendance at college decreased. In the interim he found himself a job at a local fast food establishment and due to his mental health and attendance issues, was taken off roll from college. As a consequence, he then become NEET by the start of Year 13 due to continuing to struggle with his mental health declining again, he had a new diagnosis. Throughout Year 13 he persevered with applying for jobs and applications, working on his CV and with his mental health whereby he was successful in securing an apprenticeship role in the business admin sector within the NHS and started this July. He is doing well.

Higher Education

We currently have approximately 20 young people and care leavers at university. Our young people attend different universities, including Birmingham, Greenwich, London South bank, University of Law and Goldsmiths to name but a few. Some of the courses our young people are studying include law, business, psychology, music and nursing. This shows that despite adversity, a number of our young people go on to further and higher education.

A number of our care leavers also graduated. Of our nine young people this year who applied for university or equivalent, eight were offered a place at university, one took a gap year option and another is re-taking functional skills in Maths with a view to starting a course in midwifery in January or September 2024.

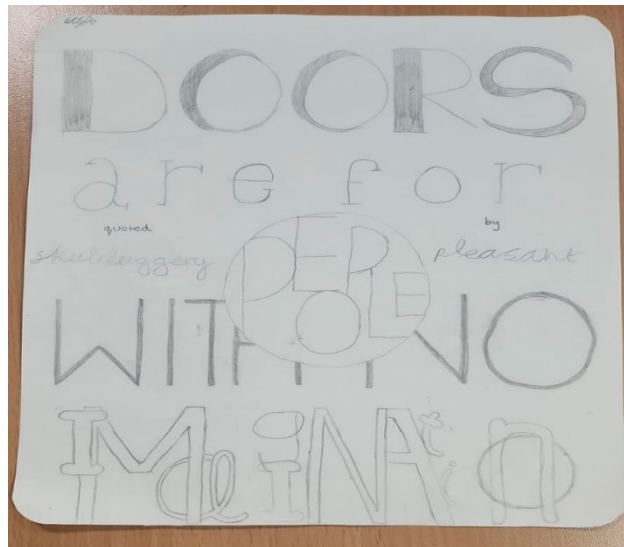
Table 14 – Number of children in our care at University

Cohort	Care leavers (1 st year)	Care leavers (2 nd year)	Care leavers (3 rd year)	TOTAL
Number attending university	6	6	8	20

NEET

We have allocated a NEET Officer (not in education, employment or training) within the Virtual School for this cohort. A specific NEET PEP document that is more concise and relevant has also been developed. The Guidance for Social Workers (in the PEP discussion box) includes targeted questions to ensure that discussions are being held and any identified barriers are being addressed. This will provide useful information for professionals if the Virtual School Officer is not in attendance at the PEP meetings which are still to be held on a termly basis. A careers advisor will be invited to PEPs where possible, to allow initial introduction and to obtain information on young people’s interests to be further discussed when they meet. Meetings are held on a six weekly basis between the NEET officer and the careers advisor.

A NEET Opportunities Pack has been collated as a working document which is to be regularly updated and shared amongst placement staff who, in turn, will distribute this to all young people. Opportunities information is also consistently sent out to each young person or placement staff. Furthermore, a NEET Officer attending the monthly NEET panel will provide additional support through guidance and advice to enhance the collaborative work within services including Social Care, DWP and GLLaB. Training is offered to social workers and personal advisors around completing good quality PEPs for all Post 16, including NEET young people.



Art piece by C (aged 15)

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS Key Stages 1- 4

As of July 2023, there were 287 children in our care (Year R to Year 11), 73 children have SEND support within schools, including two who have EHC plans pending, 79 children have EHC plans. The total number of children identified as having SEND is 152 (**53 %**). This is a **4%** increase from last year's cohort of children in our care.

Out of school context

As of July 2023, there are two young people out of school who have an EHCP. Both have tuition in place whilst the search for an education provision continues. In both cases, the placement finding team (PCT) and SEND Service are jointly searching for residential homes with / without education and for SEN day schools.

Inclusion

A vital element of the Virtual School role is to support our schools with inclusive practice for children in our care. A success this year has been the communication with schools. Most schools will contact the Virtual School if they require support for a young person who has an EHC plan and will discuss the barriers and challenges before considering suspensions or advising they cannot meet needs. This provides the Virtual School with an opportunity to offer any additional

resources, advice or guidance and joined up work with Social Care and SEND teams to support the young person.

This academic year, there have been four emergency annual reviews for a change of school placement. Three of these schools agreed to additional support and funding to make adjustments to keep the place open for the young people. In the summer term, one of the schools did need to end the placement but a new provision has been secured for September. One young person moved schools after the emergency annual review but this was the second emergency review after the agreed input from the first annual review was not effective.

Despite the efforts of everyone involved, young people with EHC plans have been suspended over the academic year. These suspensions have triggered the Virtual School's intervention and led to changes to support the school.

Successes

There have been many successes throughout the academic year. Every child or young person with an EHC plan had at least one PEP attended. Most children had two PEPs attended and some had all three PEPs attended in addition to professionals' meetings. Most children had annual reviews attended by Virtual School officers.

The PEP process and attending annual reviews is one of the most valuable resources we can offer our schools and young people. Children and young people with EHC plans have made good use of Pupil Premium Plus this year for resources and interventions that are beyond what their EHC plan funding and provision offers. Examples of Pupil Premium Plus include mentoring, counselling, tuition, trips, visits, specialist resources, bespoke learning opportunities, therapies such as play therapy, rebound therapy, music therapy and art therapy. On occasion, Pupil Premium Plus has been used for assessments such as a dyslexia assessment and an occupational therapy assessment when there were no school resources available.

A further success this year has been improving our joined up work and processes with PCT, SEND and social care teams. PCT and SEND have joined up to work together to search for residential educational placements and although this remains a significant challenge, there have been several cases where a new home and school placement have been quickly found and the young person has had a smooth transition. Joint working with the teams enables a secure network of

professionals to be established around the young person which has made organising assessments and communication regarding moves more effective.

A further strength this year has been supporting our young people who live out of borough with a range of services. This academic year the Virtual School started working with Dare to Differ who are a mentoring service based in Kent. The company also offer counselling and a specialist teaching service. In September 2023, Dare to Differ will be mentoring five young people who are in care with Greenwich but living in different areas in the county of Kent. In addition, we have a new staff member who will be taking a lead role in developing a directory of support and interventions which exist out of borough to ensure that those who meet the criteria i.e. live outside the borough, are able to access further support the same as those living in Royal Greenwich receive, as and when needed.

ATTENDANCE & INCLUSION

Attendance

Despite national attendance figures not being at the level pre-pandemic levels, in Royal Greenwich our overall attendance for children in our care is 90.5% and our persistence absence is 23.8%. Attendance levels are slightly lower compared to last year but this in line with national attendance trends. This is similar for persistent absence which is higher than last year. Overall, KS2 children had the best attendance followed by KS1. Lack of engagement with learning and exclusions have really impacted on our KS3 and KS4 children and young people.

We know that the average attendance for children in our care attending RBG schools is similar to those attending out of borough schools. We can also see that those children placed with Royal Greenwich and agency foster carers attendance is 93% which is similar to those placed with family and friends (91%). We see a lower attendance with children in residential (80%) and lower still those in semi-independent (57%). This is also likely due to the age of our children who are in residential and semi-independent settings.

The way we continue to try to improve attendance of children in our care has been through:

- Continuing to hold monthly attendance meetings to review any CYP whose attendance has dropped to below 92.5%. Each absence is questioned, and live action minutes ensure follow up.
- Looking at creative ways to get our CYP engaged and motivated in education provision which may not include mainstream provision.
- Commissioning Welfare Call, which is a provider we commission to monitor daily attendance in school of all our children in care service, to track attendance daily for each child in care. Foster carers and social workers are alerted to unexplained absence.
- The work done to minimise the number of days out of school for suspensions.

Inclusion

As a Virtual School we are consistently championing our children and young people. This includes when, in the event of an incident, schools choose to exclude or suspend one of our children. We have worked closely with schools and providers to ensure that no child in our care is excluded from school, but we have had a challenging year of supporting our children and young people with an increased number of suspensions that have been issued throughout the academic year.

Some of the work the Virtual School does is mitigating when an exclusion may be issued and challenging schools to cancel or reduce the days of suspension if we feel it is unreasonable or inappropriate.

We have also shared the latest DfE Exclusions guidance (September 2023)³ with all our schools so they are aware of the changes to the guidelines and their responsibility to inform the social worker and Virtual School of any intentions to exclude or suspend, not only a child in our care but also children known to social care. We have written guidance which is also available on our [website](#).

Table 15 – Suspension rates of children in care attending RBG schools

Suspensions	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Number in Greenwich schools	1342	1241	1612
% In our care at time of suspension	2%	1%	1%

³ School suspensions and exclusions [DfE Suspension and Exclusion Guidelines September 2023](#)

% In our care (before, during or after suspension)	6%	3%	2%
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Our internal data relating to children in our care, collated through Welfare Call shows that KS3 and KS4 children and young people are most likely to be suspended. We can also see that the majority of suspensions take place in out of borough schools but this is primarily due to number of those attending out of borough schools and also Royal Greenwich schools tend to work more proactively and seek advice earlier, rather than later. These are some of our biggest challenges when trying to encourage better inclusive practice with schools that are out of borough and ensuring children with SEN are having their needs met. Our Year 10 cohort have definitely been our most challenging year group, in terms of supporting them with engaging and returning to meaningful education following a suspension. This cohort will continue to need lots of support as it moves into Year 11.

Table 16 – Suspension rates of children in our care

Suspensions 2023	N. Suspensions	% of suspensions	Total Days suspended	% of total days suspended
All CYP	82	100%	169	100%
F	25	30%	47.5	28%
M	57	70%	121.5	72%
Primary	6	7%	8.5	5%
Secondary	76	93%	160.5	95%
KS1	2	2%	2.5	1%
KS2	4	5%	6	4%
KS3	34	41%	79.5	47%
KS4	42	51%	81	48%
School in borough	8	10%	20.5	12%
School out of borough	74	90%	148.5	88%
SEND	59	72%	116.5	69%
EHCP/Statement	32	39%	58	34%
Y1	1	1%	1	1%
Y2	1	1%	1.5	1%
Y3	2	2%	3	2%
Y6	2	2%	3	2%
Y7	10	12%	22	13%

Y8	18	22%	41.5	25%
Y9	6	7%	16	9%
Y10	30	37%	54	32%
Y11	12	15%	27	16%

PEPs, PUPIL PREMIUM & PEA

Personalised Education Plans (PEPs)

The aim is to ensure that PEPs are completed on all children in our care in a timely manner and within the statutory frameworks for schools and social care. In addition, further analysis is carried out to implement ongoing improvements and evaluate the effectiveness and quality of the PEPs through regular auditing and working closely with all stakeholders. The aim is also to ensure that the PEPs are current and live documents for all children in our care.

To help achieve these aims, the following guidelines were issued to all those involved:

Time scales for PEPs:

- New in Care - PEP within 10 days
- Change in Placement - PEP within 20 days
- Change of school - PEP within 20 days

The PEPs must be reviewed 3 times during an academic year of which one can be a virtual PEP if everyone involved agrees to this.

- The social worker is responsible for convening a PEP although the quality of the PEP is the joint responsibility of the local authority that looks after the child and the school.
- It is the school's responsibility to ensure that the social worker and the Virtual School receive the completed PEP within the required period (15 working days from the date of the PEP Meeting).

Upon receipt of the PEPs, documents are reviewed and assessed to ensure that they are meeting the required standards. If a PEP is found to be below standard, it is sent back to the school with appropriate feedback. Support is provided to the designated teacher to ensure that the quality of the PEP is improved before it is uploaded to Mosaic (Children's Service's safeguarding and social care case management system). If social care sections are left blank then the PEP is sent to the social worker to have these sections completed.

An updated copy of the PEP is then circulated by the social worker to everyone involved.

Reporting and Analysis

To ensure compliance with the PEP guidelines, a monthly snapshot is produced highlighting the number of completed PEPs compared to required PEPs in both a termly timeframe and six monthly timeframe. The data collected is split between statutory school-age and Post16 as can be seen in the tables below for the whole academic year 2022/23.

Table 17 - PEPs 2022/23 Termly Timeframe

	Autumn Term		Spring Term		Summer Term	
	Stat age	Post 16	Stat age	Post 16	Stat age	Post 16
Required PEPs	270	118	279	98	286	64
Completed PEPs	264	95	244	85	267	56
% Completion	98%	81%	87%	87%	93%	88%
Total uploaded	186	90	193	79	202	62
% Uploaded	69%	76%	69%	81%	71%	97%

Table 18 - PEPs 2022/23 Six Monthly Timeframe

	Autumn Term		Spring Term		Summer Term	
	Stat age	Post 16	Stat age	Post 16	Stat age	Post 16
Required PEPs	270	118	279	98	286	64
Completed PEPs	266	96	274	91	282	62
% Completion	99%	81%	98%	93%	99%	97%
Total uploaded	186	90	193	79	202	62
% Uploaded	69%	76%	69%	81%	71%	97%

The PEP completion for the academic year 2022/23 stands at **93%** for statutory age for termly timeframe and **99%** for six monthly timeframe. For Post16, the completion rate is **88%** for termly timeframe and **97%** for six monthly timeframe which is an excellent result as last year it was **76%** for both termly and for six monthly.

At the end of each month, updated spreadsheets are submitted to reflect the number of PEPs undertaken and uploaded on Mosaic from the Quality Improvement Officers (QIOs). However, these were not always updated

correctly or were not returned in a timely manner. As a result, and in order to recalibrate expectations, a training session was delivered on 30th January 2023 to the QIOs and their managers. Only six people attended this training. Disappointingly, the non-attendees were the ones who really required this intervention. The training session will again be offered during the next academic year.

On 27th September 2022, PEP training for social workers was offered in person and online training via Teams to social workers. There were eight attendees of which two attended in person. This was followed up by another session on June 19th 2023, in-person and online training that was attended by nine social workers. In 2023/24 academic year, we are planning to start implementing ePEPs to help further assist the network supporting our children with a more efficient method for recording PEPs. In addition, we are introducing a quality assurance cycle for PEPs to ensure that the contents of PEPs are deemed as being good or better.

Pupil Premium Plus (PPP)

The Virtual School Headteacher is given the responsibility of dispensing PPP for all children in our care. This means that the Royal Borough of Greenwich Virtual School is responsible for allocating, monitoring and auditing the use of this funding and ensuring that the money makes a real difference to the individual children looked after by Greenwich Local Authority. Pupil Premium for looked after children cannot be carried forward into a new financial year and must be spent before the end of March or returned to the Department for Education therefore, this budget requires careful management. The majority of Pupil Premium funding has been made available to schools to meet the specific needs of individual children in line with the targets in their PEP. Children in specialist settings are not automatically given their PPP as their EHCP should fund education to meet their needs but this is looked at on a case-by-case basis. If one of our children is really struggling to engage in education we will try to fund interventions that will help to motivate them back to learning.

Specific needs might be attendance at a residential school, additional tuition or possible access to the provision of a teaching assistant or mentor to support their social and emotional needs. However, guidance states that “it may be appropriate to pool some pupil premium for activities to benefit a group of or all of the authority’s looked after children”^[1].

^[1] [Pupil premium: Virtual School Head](#)

As a school we may pool some funding to develop specific services or resources including funding educational psychologist time, reintegration officer support and work with reputable companies that offer intensive support for our most hard to reach children.

We have worked with our schools to ensure that PEP target setting is closely linked with planned interventions to close the gap and enable support for our children. We reviewed the spend and have added additional categories for how the funding has been allocated to inform us for future spend. Our audit highlighted that PEP standards have improved over the last four years reflective of target setting, expectations and including the quality of information contained within the document.

This improvement has been sustained at primary, secondary and Post 16 phases. Recording and appropriate use of the Pupil Premium improvement in previous years resulted in the funding being underspent by the Virtual School. This year it has been utilised to get maximum support for our children. Our children's voice is captured more concisely through the newly designed forms. Target setting is also improving with a focus upon more meaningful and SMART targets.

In 2023/24 we are moving to ePEPs and will utilise the functionality with this online system to further streamline how schools can apply for the additional funding thereby ensuring that money is being spent directly on our children. We are considering using the funding to develop a work experience programme which will enable all our Year 10 and 11s to have more meaningful work experiences. We will continue to fund the virtual reality headsets to support training for staff and have also booked another school journey for next year.

Personalised Education Allowance (PEA)

This money is to support children and young people with their wider educational goals and to pay for resources to support their wider educational development.

PEA requests should be discussed during PEP meetings. It is then the responsibility of the social worker to send a copy of the PEP with a PEA request form to the Virtual School. PEPs must clearly show why the request is needed to help support the young person with their educational progress. Once a PEA request has been agreed by the Virtual School for a young person, the foster carer will purchase / pay for the item or service chosen. The carer must send copies of all receipts of payment to the Virtual School who will arrange reimbursement directly into the carer's bank account.



Horse care, Jamie's Farm July '23

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM ANNUAL EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Every year we ask our schools, social workers and Independent Review Officers to nominate children in our care who have shown resilience, maturity and commitment to their learning despite the barriers they have had to face. It was with great delight that we were once again, this academic year able to hold the Annual Education Achievement Awards evening to celebrate the wonderful achievements of our young people. The ceremony was held on 14th October at Charlton Athletic Football Club. With 77 successfully nominated young people, many of whom attended the ceremony along with their guests, receiving their certificate, medal and gift voucher presented by the Mayor of the Royal Borough of Greenwich. There were also seven special awards presented by guest speakers including a presentation to our Sports Personality of the Year by professional golfer Nicola Bennett and the winner of the Outstanding Achievement in Arts award by Caron Loudy.

Following the presentation of the awards, the young people enjoyed dinner, face painting and lots of fun dancing with the party DJ. The evening concluded with the young people leaving with their awards and a photograph of being presented their award by the Mayor. A wonderful evening to celebrate and recognise the great successes of our young people's achievements.



JAMIE'S FARM SCHOOL JOURNEY

For the first time this year the Virtual School arranged the experience of a residential trip. We took two groups of 10 young people over a two week period to Jamie's Farm, a working farm in Sussex. The young people experienced authentic farm living from gathering ingredients from the farm for cooking their own meals, participating in a range of activities including farming, gardening, farm maintenance jobs, wood chopping and therapeutic horse work. The groups went out on daily walks in the local countryside and over the beautiful South Downs. During the week, they lived like a family, working, eating and playing together. There was opportunity throughout the day for the young people to reflect on their successes, giving compliments and showing recognition to each other on their achievements.

Both weeks were hugely successful, with the young people not having met each other previously, forming friendships and learning from each other. The feedback from the management team was extremely complimentary stating how

the children were focused, enthusiastic, kind and caring, very hard working and up for every challenge.

The Virtual School staff who supported the trips were extremely proud of all the young people and we are planning future visits for the forthcoming academic year to enable other cohorts of young people to enjoy and learn from the experience.



KING CHARLES III CORONATION

To celebrate the crowning of our new King we held our own celebration, making flags and hats and replicating the recommended menu by King Charles III, it was a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon to mark an important part of our young people's history.

CINDERELLA THEATRE TRIP

For our young people to enjoy and watch a live show in theatre and to broaden their experiences of the Art and Drama Culture, a trip to the local Orchard Theatre in Dartford took place in December with young people and their carers enjoying the annual Christmas pantomime production which this year was Cinderella. We have purchased theatre tickets from Bromley Churchill Theatre for future visits to be undertaken throughout the new academic year.

HOMEWORK CLUB

Since September 2022 we have been able to run our weekly homework club. Named the 'Funwork Club' by our young people it runs every Wednesday through term time. We are able to offer 30 places for young people to attend and the session provides homework support along with creative arts, sports and

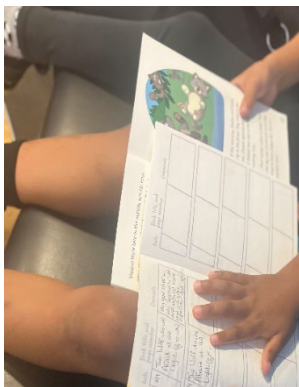
music activities. We worked in partnership with The Royal Greenwich Music Hub who provided singing and drum coaches and dance sessions with the Protein Dance group.

A hot meal is provided by our chef and the young people are involved in making menu choices, with everyone sitting together to enjoy dinner that includes the young people helping with the serving and clearing up of the meal. Through the year, sessions are held to celebrate religious festivals and special events, including World Book Day. These events always involve lots of craft activities and a themed dinner.

In November we celebrated Black History Month and Anti-bullying week, taking part in the Odd Socks Day to celebrate what makes us all unique and spread kindness! During the month of November, we had focused sessions on celebrating different communities, cultures and our own individualities.

Each year we raise funds for a charity and this year the Royal Lifeboat Association was chosen. The young people undertook a sponsored row 'across the channel' by incorporating the use of a rowing machine, covering a distance of 5km and raising over £200 for the charity.

To conclude and celebrate the end of the academic year, we took our young people to the beach for the day. We travelled down to Joss Bay where they thoroughly enjoyed the experience of having fun in the sea, sandcastle building, with a game of rounders and ice cream to finish off the day. For some of our young people this was their first visit to the seaside.



COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENT EVENT AND AWARDS



Over this academic year we successfully nominated some of our young people for special awards within the community. We had two young people receiving awards at The Shining Stars event organised by the PAN London Virtual Schools, the awards ceremony took place at the Guildhall in London.



Three of our young people were nominated and successfully received the prestigious Youth Award. They had the honour of attending the awards ceremony in January at the Supreme Court with the High Sheriff and 12 Supreme Court Judges presenting the awards to the young people.

PRIORITIES

Priorities 2023/24

Much like an actual school, our Virtual School will always strive for excellence and improvement through developing a school improvement plan. This plan is reviewed regularly with our management board but also with the RBG School Improvement Team. Below are the identified priorities and key actions to be addressed in the new academic year:

- For schools to be aware of their responsibilities in meeting the needs of previously looked after children (PLAC).
- For at least 50% of Royal Greenwich schools to be trauma informed.
- Management of attendance, suspension and exclusion data for children with a social worker (CWSW) cohort.
- Utilise the Post 16 pupil premium funding to support our 16-17 cohort.
- Develop work experience opportunities for more young people in Year 10 and Year 11.
- Improve EET % of Post 16 and care leavers/
- Develop package of support to be offered to our UAS children cohort
- Increase support and opportunities for children with SEND, particularly those with an EHC plan to help with employment and higher education.
- Ensure children with SEN have access to additional support resources by widening opportunities for young people living out of borough to bridge the gap, currently available for young people living in borough. Focusing on the young people who are out of school or on a reduced timetable.
- Review support for young people who have moved back with family but are struggling and therefore, not accessing education.
- Ensure searches for residential placements with education are supported by the relevant services in Royal Greenwich such as SEND and PCT and cases are escalated to management where placements are not secure.
- Have clearer oversight of children with SEND support to ensure their special needs are being met.
- Introduce and embed ePEPs into Royal Greenwich to support children and young people and their network.
- Improve the quality of PEPs to enable better outcomes for our children and young people, including increasing the number of PEPs completed in 10 days for those coming new into care.

- Further develop the Beyond the Classroom offer.
- Embed re-organisation to ensure individual officers are adding value to their specialist area.
- Consider how ethnicity, gender and length of time in care is impacting the outcomes of our children in our care.
- Consider how ethnicity, gender and length of time known to social care impacts upon attendance and exclusion rates of CWSW.

CITATIONS OF OUR WONDERFUL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

All of our children and young people nominated for citation in each of the categories are, without doubt, totally amazing. Their commitment, enthusiasm, determination and resilience are to be commended. Each and every one of them is to be applauded for all their incredible hard work and achievements and, despite having faced adversity and numerous challenges along the road to success. We are so proud of them all!

Child E

He has made huge improvements this year and developed a renewed attitude to his education and wants to succeed. He is working on building relationships, making good choices and is becoming more aware of his friendships and how they can positively affect his life. He took part in the residential visit with the Virtual School and was praised for his commitment to the chores and his natural ability around the animals in particular, Harry the horse! Wishing you every future success, well done!

Child F

She has worked very hard over the course of Year 11. She has improved her grades by at least 1 and 2 levels since her mock exams which shows great determination and progress. She engaged in revision sessions despite not enjoying them and has worked really hard to achieve her GCSEs. She will be returning to sixth form and deserves every success. She is to be congratulated for her effort and perseverance!

Appendices

Table I – Contextual data of children in our care

Contextual data	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of CLA in education up to age 18	477 (including year 13) + 15 pre-reception	449 (including year 13) + 9 pre-reception	461 (including year 13) + 10 pre-reception	496 (including year 13) + 19 pre-reception
Number of Children 18-25	161	236	317	392
Number of statutory age pupils Reception - Year 11	338	309	303	287
Number of schools attended by statutory age pupils	197	173	172	177
Number of statutory age pupils in Greenwich schools	124	119	129	120
Number of statutory age pupils in out of borough schools	202	179	162	163
Number of statutory age pupils not on roll at a school	14	11	12	4
Number of statutory age pupils living in borough	94	95	95	98
Number of children living out of borough SAP	244	214	208	189
% of statutory age pupils in good or	92% (288/313)	90% (259/287)	92% (243/265)	95% (246/260)

outstanding provisions (out of total provision with an OFSTED grade)				
Number of statutory age pupils with an EHC Plan/statement	99 (29%)	97 (31%)	87 (29%)	81 (28%)
Number of statutory age pupils children with SEN Support	72 (21%)	64 (21%)	60 (20%)	72 (25%)
Number of statutory age pupils in Greenwich schools looked after by other boroughs	47	47	49	44

Table 2a – Ethnicity of children in our care compared to England (according to 903 return)

Ethnicity	Greenwich						England		
	N. Pupils			Percentage of pupils			Percentage of pupils		
	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022
Asian	8	8	9	2%	2%	2%	4%	4%	5%
Black	94	73	85	20%	18%	19%	7%	7%	7%
Mixed	86	83	94	19%	20%	20%	10%	10%	10%
Other	32	15	32	7%	4%	7%	3%	3%	4%
Refused	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
White	241	238	239	52%	57%	52%	74%	75%	73%
Total	461	417	459	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 2b – Ethnicity of All Greenwich pupils compared to England (According to January School Census)

Ethnicity	Greenwich						England		
	N. Pupils			Percentage of pupils			Percentage of pupils		
	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022
Asian	4653	4634	4711	10%	10%	11%	12%	12%	12%
Black	13683	13488	13369	31%	30%	30%	6%	6%	6%
Mixed	5187	5308	5571	12%	12%	12%	6%	6%	7%
Other	1189	1270	1324	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%
Refused	771	893	892	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%
White	19205	19089	18964	43%	43%	42%	73%	72%	71%
Total	44688	44682	44831	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 2c – Percentage difference between CiOC population and School population Greenwich and England

Ethnicity	Greenwich			England		
	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022
Asian	-9%	-8%	-9%	-7%	-8%	-8%
Black	-10%	-13%	-11%	2%	1%	1%
Mixed	7%	8%	8%	4%	4%	4%
Other	4%	1%	4%	1%	1%	2%
Refused	-2%	-2%	-2%	-1%	-1%	-1%
White	9%	14%	10%	2%	3%	1%
Total	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Table 3 – Attendance of CiOC by demographic groups

Attendance	2022	2023
Number of CYP 0-18	291	235
All CYP - 0-18	92.9%	90.5%
Male	93.5%	89.6%
Female	92.1%	91.9%
Primary	96.7%	96.1%
Secondary	90.6%	89.9%
KS1	95.8%	93.5%
KS2	97.0%	96.5%
KS3	93.6%	92.9%
KS4	86.7%	83.1%
School in borough	90.5%	90.5%

School out of borough	94.7%	89.0%
SEND	93.1%	90.5%
EHCP/Statement	91.3%	91.2%
Unauthorised Absence	2.4%	3.7%
Persistent absence	17.5%	23.8%
Reception	91.6%	94.1%

Table 4 – Attendance by placement

Placement Type	N. Children	Attendance
AFC/GFC	177	93%
FFF	29	91%
RES	22	80%
Semi Indep	5	57%
SEC	1	97%

Table 5a – Absence 903 return data

Absence	201617	201718	201819	202021	202122
England	4.7%	5.0%	5.1%	9.1%	7.8%
London	5.2%	5.3%	5.4%	9.0%	7.8%
Greenwich	4.8%	4.4%	4.1%	7.3%	5.4%

Table 5b – Persistent absence 903 return data

Persistent Absence	201617	201718	201819	202021	202122
England	11.2%	11.8%	12.1%	30.4%	19.1%
London	13.7%	13.1%	13.1%	31.7%	20.1%
Greenwich	13.5%	10.0%	8.1%	27.9%	14.4%

Table 5c – % Suspended 903 return

% Suspended	201617	201718	201819	201920	202021
England	11.5%	11.3%	11.4%	9.4%	9.8%
London	11.1%	11.0%	11.0%	9.6%	9.6%
Greenwich	11.0%	10.1%	11.5%	7.9%	6.6%

Table 6a – KS2 Attainment Over Time CLA 12 months

KS2 CLA 12 months	Greenwich			England			London		
	201718	201819	202122	201718	201819	202122	201718	201819	202122

N. Pupils	25	29	20	3130	3220	3170	340	340	280
% RWM Exp+	56	28	-	35	37	31	42	42	35
% Reading Exp+	68	48	60	51	49	52	59	55	60
% Writing Exp+	60	31	40	49	50	42	54	54	47
% Maths Exp+	64	52	35	47	51	44	54	58	44
% GPS Exp+	52	48	40	50	53	47	57	59	49
% Science Exp	17	13	12	1700	1830	1700	210	210	160
Reading Progress	-0.31	-0.09	0.82	-0.16	-0.23	-0.43	1.06	0.83	-0.19
Writing Progress	-0.68	-4.07	-2.08	-0.81	-0.82	-0.74	-0.56	-0.54	-0.61
Maths Progress	-1.48	-1.31	-3.38	-0.77	-0.96	-1.04	-0.22	-0.35	-1.83

Table 6b – KS4 Attainment over time CLA 12 months

KS4 CLA 12 months	Greenwich			England			London		
	201920	202021	202122	201920	202021	202122	201920	202021	202122
N. Pupils	31	47	34	6110	5930	5980	910	810	740
A8	24.3	23.8	25	21.3	23.2	20.3	22	24.7	22
Basics 5+	-	-	17.6	10.8	12.6	11	14	16.3	16.2
Basics 4+	22.6	29.8	26.5	24.3	28.8	22.1	26.4	31.8	25.4

P8	-	-	-1.33	-	-	-1.3	-	-	-1.37
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