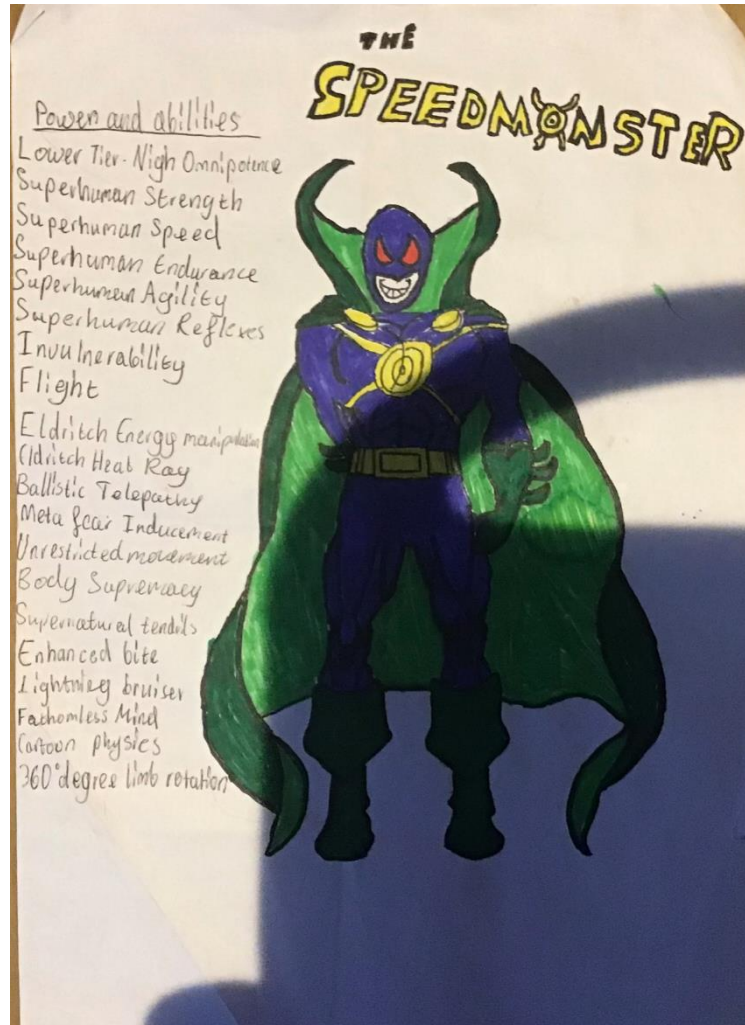


**Virtual School Headteacher's
Annual Report
2023/24**



**Eva Tabaton
Virtual School Headteacher
September 2024**



'The SPEEDMONSTER' By E (aged 15)

'Ensuring our children
and young people **thrive**'

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PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report is intended to celebrate the children in our care and give some context about some of the challenges and barriers that can impact on their education. The report will highlight the educational outcomes and attainment of children in our care during the academic year 2023/2024. It considers their achievements, and the support provided by the Virtual School to enable them to have the best opportunities. As a team, our Virtual School is whole-heartedly committed to ensuring that every child in our care gets the very best experience during their educational journey to make sure the best results can be achieved to enable their success in adulthood. 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

We have had some very challenging times during this academic year, in particular the loss of two of our children in our care and two foster carers. There are no words for the unfairness of these circumstances. The reflection to take away is that we must all continue to work together to enable all our children to have a safe experience in their childhood and to be given unlimited opportunities to be the best that they can be. I see staff in Royal Greenwich Children Services and across different directorates, schools and the community all have the privilege to help support our children and form part of the village that raises them....

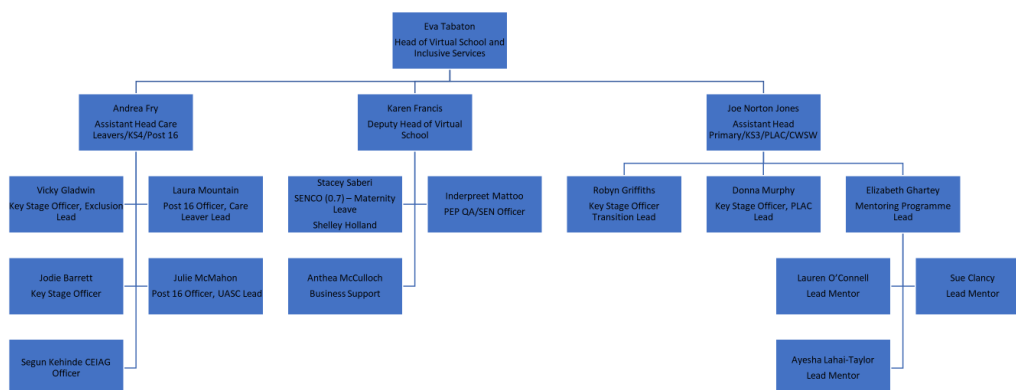
‘...It takes a village to raise a child’ (African proverb)

I also want to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of staff across Children Services. During our most recent Ofsted inspection (May 2024), the inspectors commented that ‘The work of the Virtual School is well integrated into the wider work of Children’s Services. Staff know children well and provide good oversight of the attendance and progress of looked after children.’ They also described the weekly homework club run by the Virtual School as ‘magical.’ We are truly fortunate to work with such committed and hard-working colleagues.

Eva Tabaton: Virtual School Headteacher

VIRTUAL SCHOOL STRUCTURE

Royal Greenwich Virtual School for Looked After Children



Key stage/Post 16 Education Officers

Each officer oversees a year group and supports the child or young person 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.

SENCo (special educational needs co-ordinator) and PEP Officers

We have a SENCo Officer and SENCo assistant to support children with specific learning needs. Over 50% of our children have a recognised special need so having staff with this focus and specialism enables a more tailored level of support. We also have a colleague who oversees the quality assurance of personal education plans (PEPs) and supports training social care colleagues with this responsibility for completing these documents.

CEIAG Officer

Through the targeted careers education information, advice and guidance service we have an officer (0.3) who supports our children of statutory school age with support for planning their careers. In addition to this, the Virtual School has recruited a careers practitioner who works directly in our team and is dedicated to working with our Post 16 young people and Careers Services to provide a more robust and continued offer for careers advice and guidance.

Mentoring Service

Our Mentoring Service was launched in April 2024 following a successful bid for funding from the DfE (Department for Education). This short term funded programme which runs until March 2025 is designed to deliver bespoke and intensive mentoring to children in care and care leavers. To this end, we have established a new team within the Virtual School called the Mentoring and Support Team (MAST). We successfully appointed a Programme Lead and three Lead Mentors to deliver on this. We will work with 45 children in care over at least a sixth month period seeing them twice a week in whatever space they are at e.g. school, college, home, work, wider community, etc., plus 30 care leavers. 25 of the care leavers will receive mentoring through the Volunteering Matters Grand Mentors programme who are our third-party support for the overall programme. The purpose is to support our young people wherever they are and in whatever way they need. Each intervention is bespoke to the young person. Overall, we are looking to build resilience within the young person's network to support them feeling safe, happy and included. Much of the work we have done so far is to support with education, employment and training. Each young person has a £1,000 grant for us to spend with them to deliver meaningful interventions. We are having a lot of fun supporting the young people on the programme and are looking forward to another six months of service delivery.

Educational Psychology Service (EPS)

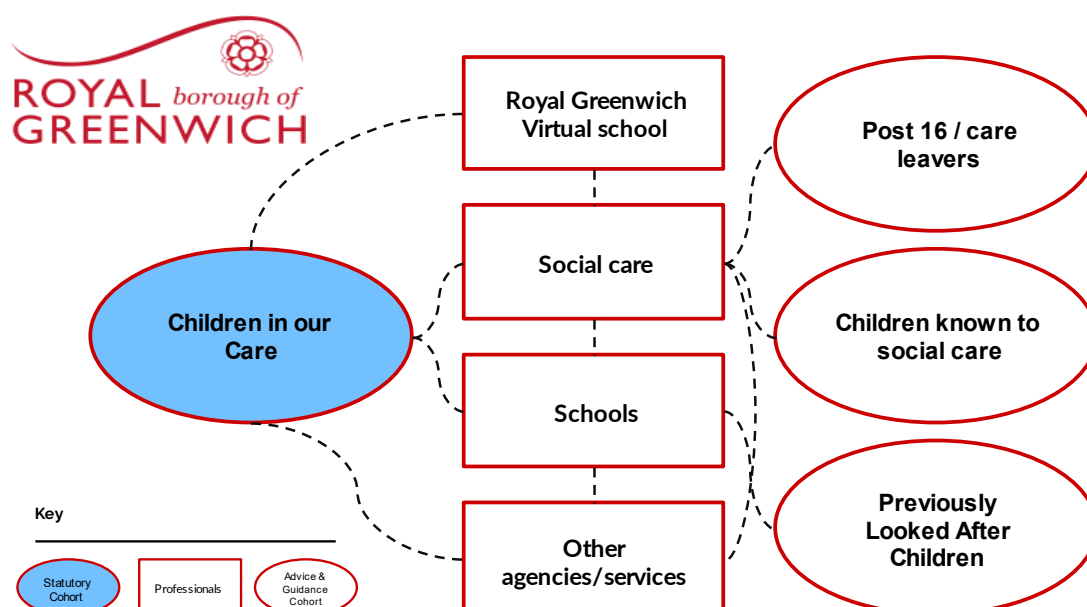
The Virtual School continues to access support from the EPS via qualified EPs and EP trainees. The use of this service has been developed to meet the ever-changing needs of children in our care and maximise any gaps in identifying any additional needs they may have. Their support and expertise are used in a number of ways, including consultations, assessments and solution circles. 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 assessments.

Reintegration Officers

The Virtual School has access to Reintegration Officers based in our Inclusion Service. 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 in the Inclusion Service 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 a child's 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 of the barriers to learning that they may be experiencing. Our officers work flexibly, undertaking home visits and attending review meetings to feedback their input and suggestions to further support our children.

OUR EXTENDED DUTIES



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

educational advocate, ensuring they promote the best educational outcomes for children and young people. This also involves 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)

This role is embedded within the Royal Greenwich's Children's Services offer. We trained social workers on how schools operate: first day calling, attendance reporting, safeguarding responsibilities, reintegration meetings, support for vulnerable learners (and families), etc. We then outlined with social workers, youth justice officers and FaASS² our expectations of schools being trauma informed and being responsive in their decisions around their most vulnerable students. This helped form relationships with social work colleagues.

Our work with schools is two-fold, case work, wider support and training. Whilst this role should not be case work based however, given the excellent working relationship between the Virtual School and our Inclusion Service there

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

² Family and Adolescent Support Service

is clear scope for overlap and collaborative working. We jointly work on cases of suspension, exclusion, medical needs and children out of school or missing education. We also have oversight of children who are registered EHE (Elective Home Education) and are known to social care.

This year we are ambitious for our schools to recognise where they are in terms of their inclusion offer and then being able to deploy different opportunities for improvement. We recognise that within the Virtual School we do not have the capacity to visit every school and offer bespoke training. Our role will be to fund, set up and make different opportunities available to schools. These are listed in our 'hopes for the future' set out below.

Wider support for schools comes in the form of bespoke training delivered to schools either by Virtual School staff or commissioned by the Virtual School. We have an emerging training offer from KCA around a Greenwich focussed Learning Journey where schools can get bespoke consultancy and a free training session around forming an attachment aware trauma informed knowledge base. Schools would then self-fund this longer term if they feel it is useful to their inclusion journey.

We are pursuing an offer with our EPS around ADHD and the impact this has on learners and our schools. This is in collaboration with Dr Nicola Reynolds the Principal Clinical Psychologist/Clinical Lead for INDT and Deputy Clinical Director for Mental Health - Health Innovation Network. We recognise the challenges children and families face with ADHD both pre and post diagnosis and want to support schools with learning to manage these needs.

We have paid for all Royal Greenwich schools to be signed up to the Attachment Research Community (ARC) schools self-audit tool. This means schools can independently audit their inclusion offer which will then allow us to support schools in becoming more proficient in terms of managing their cohorts.

We also attend a lot of panels where CWSW are discussed. These are listed in order of when we first started attending them:

- Pre-Mace
- Primary and Secondary Fair Access Panels
- Managed move forum

- DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead in schools) network meeting
- Out of Court Disposal Panel
- Deputy Headteacher Network (secondary only)

In terms of staff training, most of the training for the Virtual School is delivered by other Royal Greenwich staff. I went on the DSL training recently. We have also had staff on the Violence Reduction Unit's (VRU) Inclusive and Nurturing Schools programme training on violence against women and girls. In 2024/25 we are hoping to sign our school up on to the Nurturing Schools programme delivered by Nurture UK. This will encompass all the CPD (continuing professional development) for our staff over the next 18 months and is an accredited recognition for schools. We would be the first Virtual School in London to be recognised as a Nurturing School.

Hopes for the future:

We have been doing a lot of joined up work with the Violence Reduction Unit in London. We are early adopters of the newly launched Pan London Inclusion Charter and have helped shape what this is and how it will be implemented across London. The charter:

- Prioritises education that is fully inclusive, fair and available to all.
- Promotes and invests in inclusive practices, Children's rights and the experience of teachers are at its heart.
- Seeks to tackle the rise in suspensions and absenteeism through a set of agreed guiding principles around inclusion
- Shines a light on promising practice and celebrates inclusion already flourishing.
- Is backed up by a new partnership with UNICEF and £1.4m investment to provide a universal offer of its Rights Respecting School Award programme free to all state funded schools and education settings in the 32 local authorities in London.

We will be heavily promoting the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award as it sits nicely with the ARC audit tool we have already shared with schools. These two offers to schools will help support schools and build in sustainable change. This is linked with the KCA offer which focusses heavily on staff emotional capacity. We recognise that great inclusion takes great staff who feel well trained but also emotionally able to support our most vulnerable young people.

The Virtual School Headteacher role is becoming more strategic (and inclusion focussed) but the work of getting recognised for what this Service can offer has been well received. The phone is always ringing with social workers needing support or schools reaching out for advice.

Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)

The rationale is to support schools with recognising who their PLAC are and how to ensure funding (£2,570 for 2024/25) for these children is secured. All Schools have been provided with training and resources at the start of the 2023/24 academic year to encourage them to promote the needs of PLAC and to record their PLAC on the October census in order to receive additional funding. At the beginning of the new academic year, we will send out information about claiming this additional funding through the Children's Service Schools' e-Bulletin to ensure new members of staff within schools are aware of how to identify the PLAC children, how to claim the funding and guidance on how the funding should be spent. We also offer a pathway for schools to approach the Virtual School to talk through specific cases where PLAC need additional support and have on occasions attended meetings to support all parties to help meet the needs of the child. We provide guidance and signposting to relevant organisations for any child that is up to three-year post-adoption via the Royal Borough of Greenwich or who are currently residing in the Greenwich Borough. 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 our School Admissions Service, with the parent or guardian's consent, to ensure that their first preference school is offered. The school is contacted to ensure that they have all the relevant information to support the best transition possible. As of May 2024, there were **248** children registered as being PLAC (7 attending nursery, 147 attending primary and 89 attending secondary). 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 2023/24 we changed our Virtual School structure to try and respond to need and offer a more robust package for the Post 16 and Care Leavers. One officer works with NEET and UAS Children, one officer is assigned to Year 12/13 and we appointed a new post for CEIAG. This post has allowed us to be able to contact our Care Leavers up to the age of 25, to be able to offer support in getting back into employment or a training course. Our officer attends the

weekly Job Club at GLLAB and works with our colleagues from the DWP at the fortnightly meetings where advice is offered and visits arranged to see the YP to be able to support with CV's and job applications. One of our Post 16 team now sits monthly on the NEET panel to be able to work with the Leaving Care Team to re-engage our YP. We continue to have PEP meetings up to the end of Year 13 and support the University transition. Our Care Leaver specialist has improved upon our contact with our university attendees by making at least 3 check ins per year including direct contact information. This ensures we can intervene earlier should there be any issues that may cause a child to want to drop out of their course. The DFE allocated a budget for Post 16 this year that enabled us to support this cohort. We used the funding for a wide variety of projects that included beyond the classroom activities such as theatre trips, trips to London for one of our learners with SEN, tuition support for A levels and GCSE resits, laptops, stationary, CSCS (construction skills certificate scheme) courses along with attending sports facilities for some of our young people. We are working closely with our colleagues in local colleges to be able to offer short courses for employability, traineeships and work experience. This year we had 127 young people in Post 16 and 521 Care Leavers 18-25 years, many of whom have been contacted and offered support and attendance at careers and jobs fairs.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker (UAS) CHILDREN

We have approximately **35** children and young people in our care who are unaccompanied asylum seeking children. 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 young people. 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 new Anspear App specifically to target the UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children) cohort, with a wide range of relevant 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

young person'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 Safeguarding 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, this academic year there have been many developments in support for the UAS children cohort including a drop-in support service for two weeks in the lead up to the December break, offering guidance and advice. The UASC cohort had access to a tri-borough sports day that was held at Eltham on 5 July 2024. There was also a one-week holiday club held on 5th August locally for the young people to engage in sports, cooking and learning to enhance their knowledge of the English language. All those attended will also be invited to the Children Achievement Awards held in October 2024. There has been an increase in nominations for the awards and six young people have been nominated for their determination to succeed. Further developments are being looked at for the next academic year ahead including a team building trip and possible youth club provision to support and enhance the UAS cohort's experience within Royal Greenwich's care.

KEY STRENGTHS

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

- We have a total of **twenty** care leavers currently at university over a three-year period with **seven** planning to start in September 2024.
- Despite ongoing national and local challenges with attendance, our overall attendance for all our school-aged children was **91.2%** which is an increase from last year.
- The Virtual School has worked with schools to ensure there are no permanent exclusions of any of our children in care and reduce suspensions, so children and young people do not miss additional school days.

- For the time, the Virtual School got the opportunity to enter the London Marathon. **Eleven** children competed on the day and Royal Greenwich had the highest number of entries from all the London Virtual Schools.
- The Virtual School staff continue to work collaboratively with our Inclusion Service offering the best support to our children and young people, engaging with them both in and out of school.
- 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.
- Recently, we moved our Personal Education Plan (PEPs) onto an electronic platform to support better access and improve record keeping of a child's educational journey whilst in our care. Whilst this has had its challenges to implement, colleagues have been working hard to integrate this into their practice. Despite some of the challenges, **99%** of PEPs were completed in the six-month timeframe for children of statutory school age, **97%** termly. For our Post 16 young people **100%** were completed in the six-month timeframe, **96%** termly during 2022/23 which is a significant increase from last year.
- Where some of our children have not been in school, the Virtual School has worked closely with schools, carers and social workers to maintain academic progress and facilitate tutoring or other bespoke interventions to support engagement and progress. OFSTED noted that our Virtual School 'assess and understand the risks to children and focus their efforts on those with higher-level needs. They adapt plans and provision quickly as children's circumstances change. This supports the progress and attendance of looked after children, including unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and those living outside the borough.'
- 88 children in our care have been nominated by social workers and Virtual School staff for our Children Achievement Awards which will be celebrated in October 2024.
- Our UASC officer has led a summer programme for **nine** of our children which was a great opportunity for the young people to learn and make new friends. They fully engaged with the holiday programme and learned new skills. The young people fed back that they loved the football and playing ping-pong. They also liked to learn how to cook new foods, especially meatballs which they have never had before and they made new friends and enjoyed learning English.

- Two of our children were nominated and received a Shining Star Award for their achievements celebrated at London Inner Temple Hall.
- We have a Career's Practitioner supporting Post 16 and care leavers. They are offering additional support to our children and young people and enabling more join up with opportunities available to them.
- We were able to run our weekly Homework (Fun work) Club throughout the academic year for up to **30** children and young people in our care which included celebrating key events over the year.
- Members of our team took part in our now annual school journey. **Ten** children attended a week at Jamie's farm and it was another massive success.

Challenges 2023/24

- **Twenty-one** children were new into care in Year 11 across this academic year, which is a higher number than in previous years. In some cases, the young people are involved in certain lifestyles or complex situations by the time they enter care which makes it very difficult for Virtual School staff to help them to see the value of engaging with education.
- Specialist provision for our children with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) and length of time taken to consult with specialist settings.

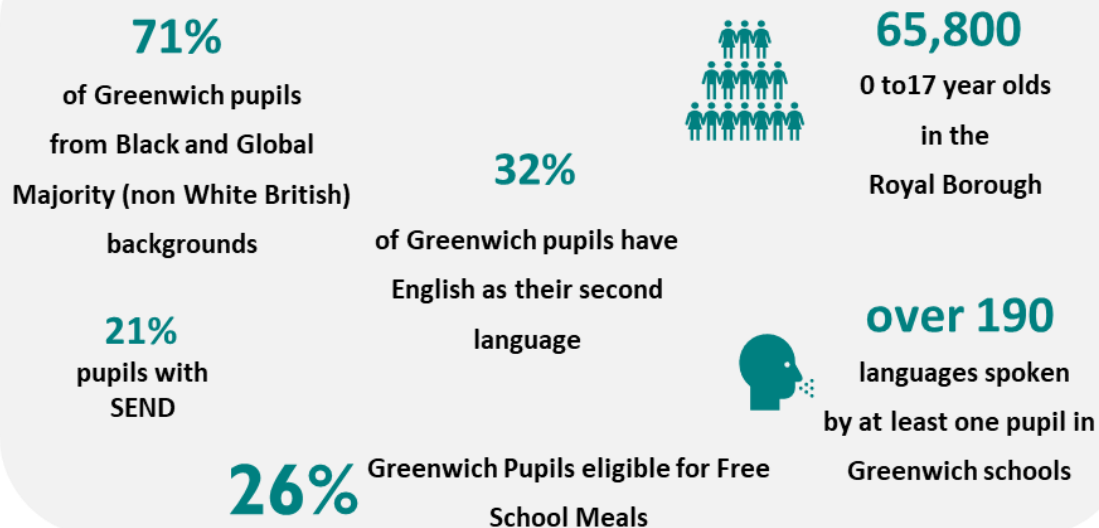
CONTEXTUAL DATA

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's Services. 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 32 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, associated with the river and more recently, as an industrial centre at the Royal Arsenal.

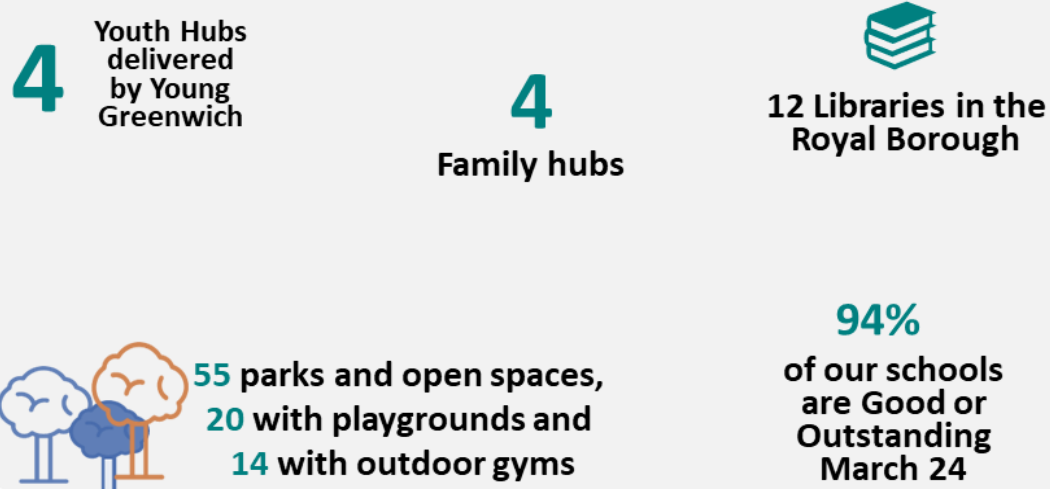
Royal Greenwich is one of 12 boroughs that make up the London Thames Gateway, the UK's largest regeneration area. Predominantly sub-urban in character, Royal Greenwich comprises three main town centres: Greenwich, Charlton and Eltham. The borough has a population of 298,000 as of 2023 GLA

population projections. Approximately 65,800 (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



The Place



The number of children in our care over the last four years varies between 450-500 at any given time. Our rate of children in care is slightly lower than the England average, but higher than London. 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 has increased slightly year-on-year. The numbers in both Post 16 and ages 18-25 have also increased by a third. 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 27% and 21% of those at SEND support level. Therefore, almost 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 93% 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 place of education is identified).

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 2024. There are a number of our children and young people who come into care for a brief period, 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.



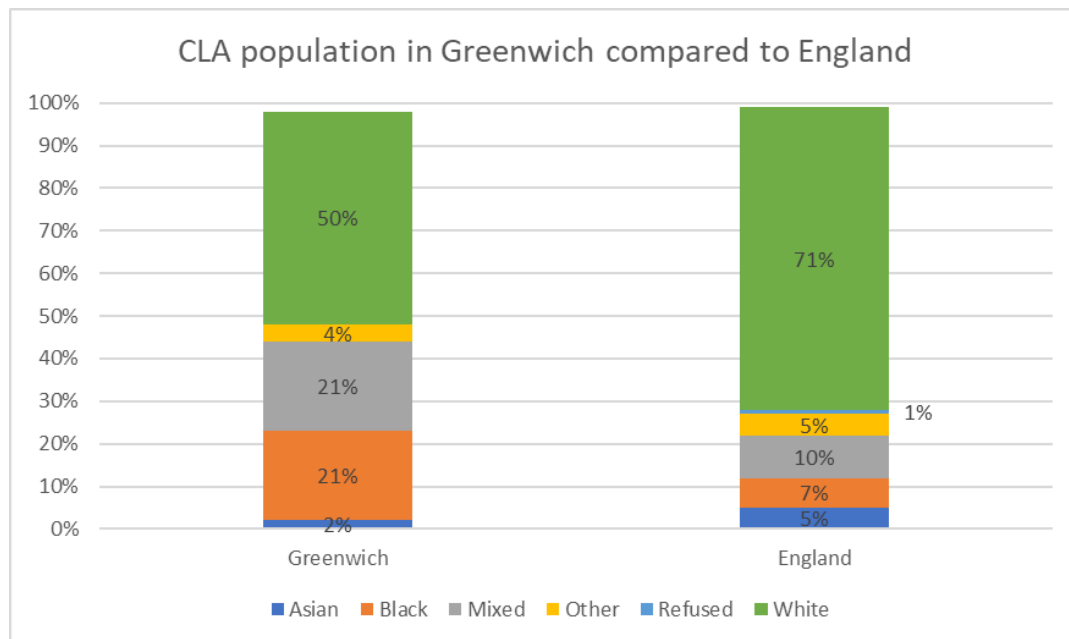
Our young people at Jamie's farm July 2024

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.

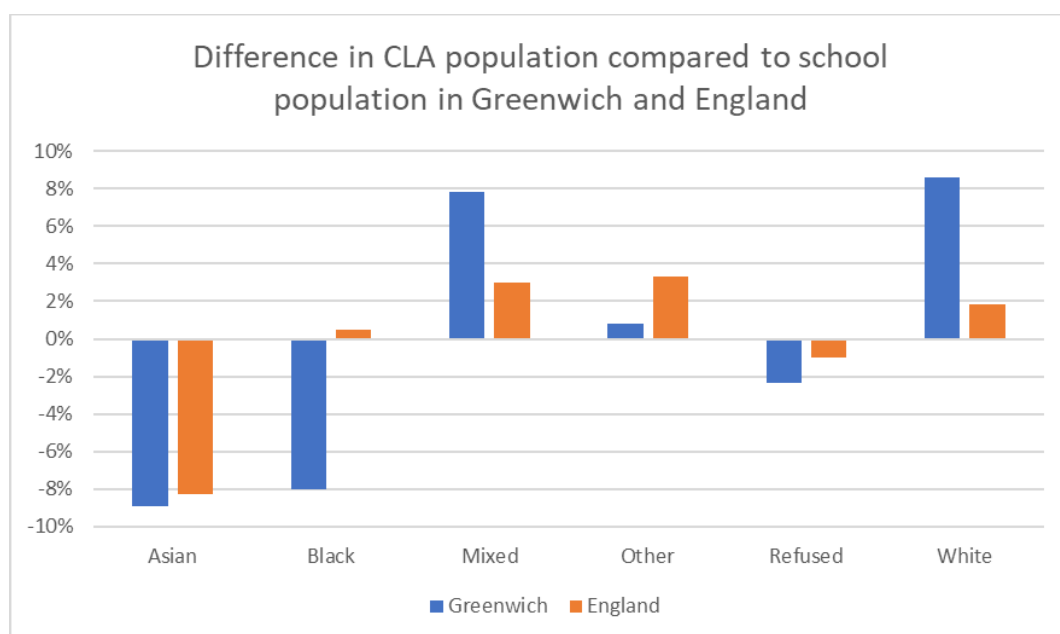
The ethnic composition of children in our care has remained stable over the past few years both in Greenwich and England. Greenwich has a higher proportion of Black and mixed ethnic groups in care compared to England which has a far higher proportion of White children in care. Shown in Chart 1a below.

Chart 1a – Percentage of children in care – from DfE Statutory return (2023 latest available)



Many of the demographic differences between 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



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	2021/22		2022/23		2023/24	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0-2 years	291	34%	257	29%	283	32%
3-5 years	237	28%	236	27%	191	22%
6-9 years	167	20%	208	24%	251	28%
10+ years	152	18%	181	21%	199	23%
Total in cohort	847	100%	882	100%	924	100%

Location of placements

As the chart and graph below show, over a third of children and young people in our care are residing in our borough, this has increased slightly compared to previous years. Kent has the second highest number of our children resident, followed by Lewisham 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 regarding the provision for all our children in our care with an equitable offer of support and facilities. The table below reflects the known boroughs in which our children and young people of statutory school age have resided during 2023/24. 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 2023/24	N. CiOC	% CiOC
Greenwich	161	37%
Kent	105	24%
Bexley	35	8%
Lewisham	23	5%
Croydon	14	3%
Bromley	8	2%
Essex	6	1%
Southwark	6	1%
Newham	6	1%
Lambeth	5	1%
Others (5 and below)	65	16%

Number of placements

The table below shows that most of our children have either none 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 must move, the network meet to look at ways to support this transition to have the least negative impact.

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

All CiOC - N. Placements	2021/22		2022/23		2023/24	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
No Placements	635	75%	392	44%	474	54%
1-2 Placements	189	22%	451	51%	417	47%
3-5 Placements	19	2%	39	4%	41	5%
6-9 Placements	4	0%	0	0%	2	0%
10+ Placements	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total in cohort	847	100%	882	100%	934	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. A large proportion of children in care do not always make the same

attainment progress as their peers, even if they may catch up at other points in their lives. It is important we focus on their own specific progress as opposed to comparing them only to their peers. 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 most children in our care continue to make progress throughout the academic year. This is monitored by the children's allocated Virtual School 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, most children will make progress even if it is not in line with their peers.

The table below covers the key performance indicators (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 statistical³ cohort.

Table 5 – Attainment of Primary Phase Children in our Care CioC

Primary Phase Attainment Statistical Cohort	Greenwich 2022	Greenwich 2023	Greenwich 2024	2024 Eng CioC	2024 Eng All pupils
EYFSP (Early Years Foundation Stage Profile)					
N. Pupils	6	-	12	-	-
EYFSP GLD	66.70%	-	58.3%	39%	67%
Yr 1 Phonics N. Pupils	4	7	7	-	-
Yr 1 Phonics Screening Check	50%	71.4%	71.4%	61%	80%
KS1 N. Pupils	12	4	15	-	-
KS1 Reading Exp+	41.7%	50%	40.0%	-	-
KS1 Reading GDS	16.7%	0%	20.0%	-	-
KS1 Writing Exp+	33.3%	50%	46.7%	-	-
KS1 Writing GDS	8.3%	0%	20.0%	-	-
KS1 Maths Exp+	58.3%	25%	60.0%	-	-
KS1 Maths GDS	8.3%	0%	20.0%	-	-
KS2 N. Pupils	19	17	15	-	-
KS2 RWM Exp+	21.1%	52.9%	40.0%	34%	61%
KS2 RWM High	5.3%	5.9%	0.0%	1%	8%
KS2 Reading Exp+	57.9%	76.5%	53.3%	53%	74%

³ 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.

KS2 Reading High	10.5%	11.8%	20.0%	15%	29%
KS2 Writing Exp+	36.8%	52.9%	46.7%	47%	72%
KS2 Writing GDS	5.3%	5.9%	0.0%	4%	13%
KS2 Maths Exp+	31.6%	70.6%	66.7%	47%	73%
KS2 Maths GDS	5.3%	5.9%	20.0%	8%	24%

Progression from Reception to Year 1

Of the 11 children within the year group, eight children (72.7%) achieved Good Level of Development (GLD) and therefore, are currently working at age-related expectations and three children (27.3%) are working towards age-related expectations. Two of these children are listed as SEND Support and the other has suffered the bereavement of their long-term foster mother. Overall, the progress is below national but significantly higher than CiOC nationally.

Early Years Case study

A young person had a hip operation and was expected to be away from school for a long time due to recovery. Liaison with the Virtual School ensured appropriate support was put in place to support the school in getting the young person back into school as quickly as possible. We funded resources to support their fine motor skills such as manipulatives and other equipment to keep them engaged in activities whilst they were unable to take part in outdoor activities and PE.

Year 1 phonics screening

Of the 11 children in the Year 1 cohort, five were at age-expected, three were disapplied due to their learning needs and one was out of school. Two children from the Year 1 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 needing 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. Of the 11 Year 1 pupils, 11 count within the phonics statistical cohort. Of these 7 (71.4%) achieved the expected level in

phonics, which is below the England all pupil average of 80% but four percentage points above the provisional England children in care average (67%).

Year 2 SATs

Of the 15 children in our care in Year 2, five (33.3%) achieved their expected level in reading and writing (20% GDS {greater depth} and 13.3 EXS {expected standard}). Maths was at 60%. Due to the SATs in Year 2 now being optional, no national data has been released to allow us to make comparisons. A number of our children have a recognised SEND need, including autism (ASD), attention deficit hyperactivity (ADHD), social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) and speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). Gaps in knowledge have been identified and interventions are being put in place to support and close the gaps in Year 3.

Year 6 SATs

Of the 18 children in the cohort, four did not sit the SATs exam (three have an EHC plan and one has a recent application for an EHC plan). Overall, the Year 6 cohort has been a relatively calm and well achieving cohort that has received lots of praise from their schools regarding pupils' progress and readiness for secondary school. They have had good attendance and only one suspension. The results show that Maths is a stronger subject for this cohort and they scored above the national average. Only three children did not achieve the expected mark in maths. Writing is the weakest subject for them and none achieved greater depth in this area. Governmental benchmarking for this year group heavily takes into account the disruption to learning caused by Covid-19 lockdowns. This would have been when they were in Years 2 and 3.

Year 11

There are 62 young people in Year 11. Of these, 23 have an EHC plan, plus two that are pending. Fifteen are registered as SEND Support which can make accessing mainstream education more challenging. We also had 21 young people that came into care within this year group and six were already disengaged from school, being at the point of exclusion. Of the new in care, 10 young people were unaccompanied asylum seekers and not entered for their GCSEs.

Of all our Year 11 young people, 29 were entered into GCSEs. Of those, six achieved Level 4+ combined English and Maths. Our statutory cohort this year was 25. Out of this cohort, three did not sit English and Maths GCSEs, one lives in Scotland and sat their exams, two have SEND and gained other qualifications

at Entry Level. Two achieved Level 5+ combined English and Maths from the statutory cohort.

Post-pandemic marking has this year gone back to pre-pandemic levelling. This year are the cohort that were in Year 7 when we experienced lockdown. This must have played a role in the levels. We had a significant amount, over half who did not sit their exams.

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

KS4 Outcomes 2024	N. Pupils	% Pupils	Stat cohort	Stat cohort %
N. Pupils	62	100%	40	100%
No Results	6	10%	6	15%
Did not sit exams (Core Subjects)	33	53%	15	38%
4+ Eng	12	19%	9	23%
4+ Maths	7	11%	5	13%
4+ Eng & Maths	6	10%	4	10%
5+ Eng	7	11%	6	15%
5+ Maths	4	6%	3	8%
5+ Eng & Maths	2	3%	2	5%
5 or more 9-1 pass	15	24%	12	30%

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

K missed much of their education through Years 9 and 10 following having experienced the breakdown of their long-term placement, several changes in school settings and very low school attendance. This also included a disengagement to learning or enthusiasm to pursue their ambition in the sports field of which they are a talented sportsperson. With the encouragement of their residential placement and the support of their professional network, they started a new school at the beginning of Year 11. Attendance dramatically improved coupled with engagement in additional tuition, K undertook formal exams which resulted in securing a Post 16 secondary school placement to study a construction course, further Maths/English exam courses, alongside a sports academy to continue ambitions for their future carer. They have shown great courage re-engaging in education, and everyone is extremely proud of their resilience and new determination.

H experienced a very difficult Year 11 due to health complications, impacting on their ability to attend school full time. They have shown great resilience through their thirst to learn and ambitions for their future career. Despite being unable to attend their education setting full-time, they undertook additional tuition whenever they were able to manage, sitting their formal exams in their home placement. Through their determination they have attained great results in Maths, English and Science obtaining Level 5 in all subjects. This has enabled them to secure their first choice Post 16 placement and course to pursue their career ambitions. A strong and determined young person who we know will achieve great things.

Table 7 – Attainment of Secondary Phase Children in our Care (CioC)*

Secondary Phase Attainment Statistical Cohort	2022	2023	2023 Eng CioC	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.*



Painting by E (aged 15 years)

FURTHER & HIGHER EDUCATION

Year 12

In total, over the course of the academic year, there have been 63 young people in care in Year 12. The NEET (not in education, employment or training) cohort at the end of the year was 15 young people. Out of the 63 Year 12 cohort, 22 have been recorded to have additional needs/EHCP.

There is a possibility of seven young people who will apply for university this year to start in 2025 which will be looked at during September/October Term 2024. 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 2024/25

Destination for Year	No.
Apprenticeship	2
NEET	15
SIXTH FORM/College	35
Still awaiting information	11
TOTAL	63

Year 13

In total, over the course of the academic year there have been 70 young people in care in Year 13, at the end of the year the total number still in care is 60. Of the 60 children in our care in Year 13, we had a number of young people on different pathways. A small proportion completed A-Levels, eight have all been offered university placements at Nottingham, Birmingham, Ravensbourne, Southampton, University of Greenwich, UCL and Epsom.

All ESOL (UAS children) that passed their courses, either pre-entry or Entry levels 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 the 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. We also attend the Corporate Parenting Board to discuss other interventions across the country that are successful and share good practice with other VS Post 16 boroughs.

Table 9 – A level and IB results

Qualification Type	N. Pupils	B	C	D	E
A level	3	1	2	4	1
International Baccalaureate	2	3	3	0	0
Cumulative %	5	29%	64%	93%	100%

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 10 – Destinations for Year 13 children 2024/25

Destination	N. Pupils	%
Apprenticeship	10	17%
ESOL placement	5	8%
College	7	12%
Employment	1	2%
JYS	4	7%
NEET	20	33%
Seeking employment	1	2%
Uni pending	1	2%
SEND Provision	4	7%
University	7	12%
TOTAL	60	100%

YEAR 13 Success Stories

D in Year 13 with an EHC plan studied agriculture in a local college. The Virtual School Officer has a good relationship with the carer, social worker and college. The young person engaged well but during Year 12 had to face criticism for behaviour concerns, potentially being asked to leave the course. This was turned around with regular conversations, words of encouragement and meetings to wrap around and support the young person to make the right choices. Year 13 was a complete success, a fantastic work experience led to D being offered a job, the college were so impressed that it offered D a Year 14 residential place to undertake the Level 3. This was well received coupled with the fact that D had two choices to make regarding his future. D chose to enrol in Level 3, although the theory can be difficult it will give them the right tools to progress further throughout their adult life. The Virtual School Officer nominated D for the Do the Right Thing Awards in June 2024 and the Achievement Awards in October.

S has an EHC plan, specific needs physically and mentally. S has been in a SEND provision since Year 7 and during Years 12. There has been a consistent staff network around them to support their progress, attainment and overcome barriers to learning. S has been nominated for two awards during Year 12 and had a personalised external visit on a 1:1. S had a successful summer PEP which

included transition planning to a local college that was identified to meet their needs. The relevant professionals from the college were able to plan, prepare and support S by having all the information from the previous PEP, and face-to-face discussions with both the Virtual School Officer and the current school. Although S has complex issues, professionals have been in full contact with each other throughout the two years of Post 16 to support and make all the necessary plans to enable the transition to be as smooth as possible.

Higher Education

We currently have 20 young people and care leavers at university. Our young people attend different universities, including Nottingham, Birmingham, Ravensbourne, London South Bank, Goldsmiths and Greenwich to name but a few. Some of the courses our young people are studying include Pharmacy, Sport, Fashion, Nursing, Law, Music and Finance demonstrating 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 eight young people this year who applied for university or equivalent, they were all offered a place at university and we know that seven accepted. One young person has been disengaged since returning to parents care at the end of the academic year so we are unsure if she has accepted her place but will continue to pursue this and offer support if needed.

Table 11 – Number of children in our care at university

Cohort	Care leavers (1 st year) Sep '24	Care leavers (2 nd year)	Care leavers (3 rd year)	TOTAL
Number attending university	7	6	7	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 and 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 (Department for Work and Pensions) and GLLaB (Greenwich Local Labour and Business). Training is offered to social workers and personal advisors around completing good quality PEPs for all Post 16, including NEET young people. In addition, these are a few of the developments we have made since last academic year:

- A Careers Practitioner has been working with us since February this year to support our care leavers and NEET. They have been sending out opportunities weekly to young people and placement staff.
- The Careers Practitioner now attends the weekly job interviews at the Job Centre with the DWP. This has been crucial in picking up our care leavers and NEETS, as they must attend regularly for their benefits.
- Training is offered to social workers and personal advisors on completing good quality PEPs for all Post 16, including NEETs.
- Designated Teacher (DT) training for Post 16 Provisions offered.
- Six weekly meetings between the NEET Officer and Careers Advisor for Year 12 and some Year 13. The Virtual School Careers Practitioner works with the CEIAG (Careers Education, Information and Guidance) Service for handover to Year 13. If there is a current relationship between the young person and Careers Advisor, then we are keeping them in place to support Year 13's at this point.
- The Assistant Head of the Virtual School and Careers Practitioner have been attending monthly NEET panel meetings to support with advice and guidance, and improve collaborative working with services including Social Care, DWP and GLLaB. The NEET Officer will begin attending from September

- A drop-in session has been put in place for CV writing, job applications, careers advice and an opportunity to meet with the GLLAB worker
- We have been in conversations with LSEC (London Southeast College) and are getting numbers together to run two different short courses in the new academic year. One is for the 16-18 cohort and the other for 18+.

They will focus on employability, CV writing, job applications interview techniques.



Art piece by C (aged 15)

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Key Stages 1- 4

There are 234 children who have SEND within our school, including two who have EHC plans pending, 107 children have EHC plans. The total number of children identified as having SEND is **50%** of our whole cohort. This is a similar percentage of SEND compared to previous years.

Progress

Across all year groups from Years 1 to 13 for children with an EHCP:

- 58% are making expected progress or above
- 42% are not achieving expected progress and are working below.

Students not making expected progress for a variety of reasons including placement and school moves, missing episodes, delay in finding education to be able to meet needs of our more complex cohort.

Tuition and mentoring schemes are implemented to support our cohort achieve a well-balanced curriculum when there are delays in sourcing new education provisions.

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, in our case 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 Services to support the young person.

SEND Case study

K has had three secondary school placements and following several incidents at K's last school and their vulnerabilities, tuition was implemented. K struggles to manage peer relationships and this was the main cause of the breakdowns in schools. K was spending a lot of time with their mum and was returning to her house three days per week. Therefore, The SEND Service sourced a tutor for two days per week at K's placement and three days per week at mum's house. A parenting assessment was completed and K returned to live with mum in Kent full time. The Virtual School Officer accompanied K and mum to a new small Post 16 provision and secured education for September.

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 **91.2%** - a slight increase from last year. Our persistence absence is **19.5%** which is

significantly lower than the previous year (23.8% in 2022/23). Overall, EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) and KS2 (Key Stage) children had the best attendance followed by KS3. Lack of engagement with learning and exclusions have really impacted our KS4 children and young people.

We know that the average attendance for children in our care attending Royal Greenwich schools is better than those attending out of borough schools. This may be due to some of those placed out of borough are attending specialist settings and have additional needs which impacts on overall attendance. We can also see that those children placed within Royal Greenwich and agency foster carers have an attendance of 93% which is higher than those placed with family and friends (88%). We see a lower attendance with children in residential settings (75%). Those in semi-independent living has increased significantly this year to 94% 2022/23

We aim to improve attendance of children in our care through:

- Continuing to hold monthly attendance meetings to review any children and young people whose attendance has dropped below 92.5%. Each absence is questioned and live action minutes ensure follow up.
- Looking at creative ways to get our children and young people engaged and motivated in education provision which may not include mainstream provision.
- Commissioning specialist services to provide daily mentoring and experiences for our children not engaging in education.
- Commissioning Welfare Call, a provider we commission to monitor the daily attendance in school of all our children in care. Foster carers and social workers are alerted to unexplained absences.
- Challenging and reflecting on suspensions issued to minimise the number of days missed at school.

Inclusion

As a Virtual School we tirelessly champion 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 in supporting our children and young people with the increased number of suspensions that have been issued.

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. This year we managed to circumnavigate three exclusions for children in our care, making sure they had access to education despite the circumstances of the original exclusion.

We have also shared the latest DfE Exclusions guidance (September 2023)⁴ 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 [Greenwich Virtual School \(virtualschoolgreenwich.org.uk\)](https://virtualschoolgreenwich.org.uk).

Table 12 – Suspension rates of children in care attending RBG schools

Suspensions	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Number in Greenwich schools	1612	2296	2664
% In our care at time of suspension	1%	1%	1%
% In our care (before, during or after suspension)	2%	2%	2%

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 suspensions across in and out of borough schools are similar. Historically, out of borough schools were more likely to suspend but this has improved over the last few years, showing the collaboration and challenge from Virtual School officers to support this change and ensure that our children are not receiving a punitive response. Our Year 8 and Year 9 cohort have been our most challenging year group, in terms of supporting them with engaging and returning to meaningful education following a suspension. Year 10 and 11 have also had a high number of suspensions compared to other year groups. The main reason for suspensions has been disruptive behaviour which is in line with national data for reasons a child is suspended.

Table 13 – Suspension rates of children in our care

Suspensions 2024	N. Suspensions	% of suspensions	Total Days suspended	% of total days suspended
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⁴ School suspensions and exclusions [DfE Suspension and Exclusion Guidelines September 2023](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfe-suspension-and-exclusion-guidelines-september-2023)

All children and young people	96	100%	229.5	100%
Female	24	25%	59	26%
Male	58	60%	126	55%
Primary	7	7%	6.5	3%
Secondary	89	93%	223	97%
KS1	1	1%	2	1%
KS2	6	6%	4.5	2%
KS3	57	59%	145	63%
KS4	32	33%	78	34%
School in borough	37	39%	110	48%
School out of borough	59	61%	119.5	52%
SEND	61	64%	136.5	59%
EHCP/Statement	35	36%	72.5	32%
Y1	0	0%	1	0%
Y2	1	1%	2	1%
Y4	5	5%	2.5	1%
Y6	1	1%	2	1%
Y7	6	6%	14.5	6%
Y8	34	35%	89.5	39%
Y9	17	18%	41	18%
Y10	21	22%	48.5	21%
Y11	11	11%	29.5	13%

PEPs, PUPIL PREMIUM & PEA

Personalised Education Plans (PEPs)

The aim is to ensure that PEPs are completed for 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 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 three 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.

PEPs Quality Assurance Cycle

After the PEPs have been completed, they are quality assured by the Virtual School officers and then saved onto the children and young people's relevant files. Once a month, the Virtual School's senior leadership team quality assures random samples of PEPs with a particular focus on; Pupil views, SMART targets, Pupil Premium Plus, Personal Education Allowance (PEA), Record of discussion and Child-centred language.

PEPs Training

The PEPs training schedule is sent in September to all the social care teams for the whole academic year. This training is held throughout the year to enable new social workers to have access to this also. The training is hybrid training so that social workers can attend in person or via TEAMS.

Report 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 and six-monthly timeframe. The data collected is split between statutory and Post 16 as can be seen in the following tables for the whole academic year 2023/24.

Table 14 - PEPs 2023/24 Termly Timeframe

	Autumn Term		Spring Term		Summer Term	
	Stat age	Post 16	Stat age	Post 16	Stat age	Post 16
Required PEPs	270	111	288	109	297	73
Completed PEPs	266	103	205	67	288	70
% Completion	99%	93%	71%	61%	97%	96%
Total uploaded	218	97	151	68	290	71
% Uploaded	69%	76%	69%	81%	71%	97%

Table 15 - PEPs 2023/24 Six Monthly Timeframe

	Autumn Term		Spring Term		Summer Term	
	Stat age	Post 16	Stat age	Post 16	Stat age	Post 16
Required PEPs	270	111	288	109	297	73
Completed PEPs	266	103	275	95	296	73
% Completion	99%	93%	95%	87%	99%	100%
Total uploaded	218	97	151	68	290	71
% Uploaded	81%	87%	52%	62%	98%	97%

The PEP completion for the academic year 2023/24 stands at **97%** for statutory school-age for the termly timeframe and **99%** for the six-monthly timeframe. For Post 16, the completion rate is **96%** for the termly timeframe and **100%** for

the six-monthly timeframe which is an excellent result as last year it was 88% for termly and 97% for six monthly.

Pupil Premium Plus (PPP)

The Virtual School Headteacher is given the responsibility of dispensing PPP for all children in our care. 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 children in our care cannot be carried forward into a new financial year. It must be spent before the end of March or returned to the Department for Education and so this budget requires careful management. Most of the 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 EHC plan 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 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 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. We use some of the funding to help engage some of our children who are struggling to engage in education, including specialist services such as All Kids Can and Dare to Differ.

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.

Personalised Education Allowance (PEA)

This money is to support children and young people with their wider educational goals and pay for resources to support their wider educational development. It is specific to Royal Greenwich and funded through the Local Authority. Children up to the age of 16 have access to an annual budget of up to £500.



Goat feeding time, Jamie's Farm July '23

ANNUAL EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Every year we ask our schools and social workers 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 this academic year we were once again able to hold the Annual Education Achievement Awards evening to celebrate the wonderful achievements of our young people. The ceremony was held on 6 October 2023 at Charlton Athletic Football Club. With 99 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 footballer Aggie Beever-Jones and the winner of the Outstanding Achievement in Arts award by Jo Harrop singer and song-writer.

Following the presentation of the awards, the young people enjoyed dinner, face painting and had 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.

LONDON MARATHON

Eleven of our children in care participated at the Mini Marathon event in April 2024. Our children got to cross the iconic TCS London Marathon Finish Line and receive a TCS Mini London Marathon medal. Six participated in the one-mile event for children in Reception to Year 7 and five in the 2.6K route for those in Years 4 to 12. They did themselves proud by completing these distances. This is the first time virtual schools have had the chance to enter children for the marathon and this included Royal Greenwich, Camden and Sutton children. Royal Greenwich having over half the runners representing the virtual schools.



JAMIE'S FARM SCHOOL JOURNEY

This year we celebrated another visit to Jamie's Farm in Lewes, East Sussex. This fully working farm gives our young people an opportunity to develop their farm based/agriculture skills as well as supporting them to recognise how well they can build friendships, work together and cooperate with new people.



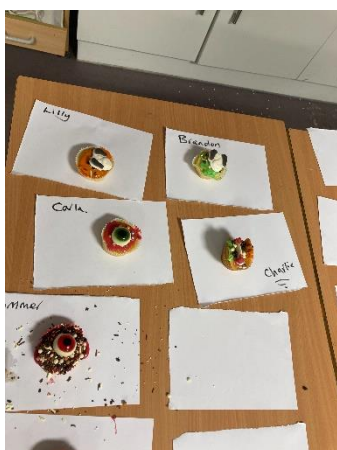
Staff from our Virtual School joined ten young people during the first week of July in a very sunny farm mucking in with the cows, sheep, goats, ducks, geese, dogs, pigs, chickens and horses. We invited young people from Years 10, 11 and 12 with a focus on supporting outcomes around education, employment and training. Amongst the ten were young people already experienced with farm workings or studying horticulture for whom the trip was an excellent opportunity to demonstrate their skills and grow in confidence to share these with others. We also welcomed young people with very limited experience of cooking, cleaning and gardening but who were fully committed to throwing themselves into all the available activities and team building opportunities.



The young people who agreed to spend a week away from home, in unfamiliar circumstances, were amazing in their individual endeavours and their determination to bond with others during their time away from home. One of the cows was very overdue in delivering her new calf. The care given by our young people (belly rubs, special diet, extra TLC) was indicative of what our young people are about when in the right environment. With appropriate support our young people can park their own challenges and disadvantages and demonstrate how much love they have to give.

HOMEWORK CLUB

The Virtual School runs a homework (fun work) club during term time. The club runs with up to 30 of our children in care and care leavers. Our youngest attendee is six and the oldest is 24. They continue to have the meal cooked by our chef, we set the table and eat a meal as a family each week.



Each year the young people put a presentation together for the Awards Ceremony in October, this year was no exception. They performed a piece on 'What you should know about me' on stage on the night, they shared a poem about themselves. We continue to celebrate Halloween, Christmas, Easter and other key events in the calendar. These are annual events that over the years

the young people really look forward to. We dress up, play team games, give prizes and presents at Christmas. We have a craft room which they can access on every session which, on festive occasions we use a lot more, making Christmas decorations, card, calendars, Easter gifts and much more.



For the past six years we have nominated a charity that we hold a sponsored event for. This year we chose the RNLI. To raise money, we set up a rowing machine in the club and the young people took it in turns to 'row' to France. They did extremely well, once they understood they were not actually rowing on water and raised £200. Another fantastic effort.

We continue to celebrate diversity each year. Two main events we celebrated were Black Children's Book Week and Black History Month. Our children sampled foods from different cultures that were supplied by staff and our foster carers bringing in food from their own cultures. The young people tried foods they had never tasted before. They were also given books from Black authors and reviewed some of the stories and experiences that they read about.



Trying pies from different cultures, February '24

AS part of our ILAC Ofsted Inspection the Education Inspector visited the club. The inspector spoke to the young people, watched them play and asked them their thoughts on the club. The Ofsted report was very positive and described the club as 'magic.'

MUSIC HUB

Royal Greenwich Virtual School and Royal Greenwich Music Service (RGMS) collaborate to enable every child in the care of Royal Greenwich to have the opportunity to access instrumental music lessons at the Royal Greenwich Music Centre. The scheme uses a combination of RGMS tutors and schools' own tutors to deliver lessons, and the scheme covers children who also attend schools outside of the borough. During early PEP meetings, Virtual School officers and schools' designated teachers ask the child if they already do, or would like to start to, play a musical instrument. A range of instruments are offered. Currently the Music Hub tutors deliver lessons to children in our care in over 12 Royal Greenwich schools.

SHINING STAR 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 Inner Temple Hall in London.

PRIORITIES

Priorities 2024/25

Our Virtual School is passionate about making an impact on every child and young person we are privileged to support. Much like any other school, we develop a yearly school improvement plan (SIP) to support our priorities for the

new academic year which we will review throughout the year. Below are the identified priorities and key actions to be addressed in the new academic year:

- Develop interventions we offer our children and young people outside of mainstream education and ensure these are monitored jointly with our Commissioning Service
- Develop the identification of Kinship families and develop offer of support as part of the Virtual School's extended duties
- To create and embed a framework for auditing, quality assurance and developing better inclusive practice in Royal Greenwich schools
- To implement, embed and evaluate the DfE funding mentoring programme with pathway to ensure legacy
- To deploy financial resources to Post 16 learners up to age of 25 and increase EET (education, employment, training) figures
- Developing bespoke interventions for Post 16 learners
- Develop provision for out of borough unaccompanied asylum seeker young people
- Develop the partnership between the Virtual School and Adulthood Services
- Embed the PEP quality assurance cycle and deliver training to support professionals
- To develop training and support for neurodiverse children and young people
- Continue to develop the Beyond the Classroom offer to promote culture capital and opportunities to experience enriching activities
- 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. We are trialling an additional officer to support KS3/4 officers with their caseloads.

CITATIONS OF OUR WONDERFUL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

All our children and young people nominated for citation in each of the categories are, without doubt, 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 incredibly proud of all our children.

R

R gives 100% effort to their education which is down to dedication and commitment to succeed. Outside of school, they partake in Sea Cadets, are qualified in sailing and are now training to be an instructor. R has a wide range of achievements, growing in confidence, independence, exceptional behaviour and attitude make them a shining star. They have worked hard to pass their Public Services Level 1 and 2 course and will be studying Level 3 at college in September. They have joined the British Exploring Society and are attending a three-week camping trip in the Highlands.

D

D is demonstrating so much promise as young person who always has a big, bright smile on their face which is a delight to their teachers, foster carer and social worker. They are meeting all expected levels in their learning and are truly unstoppable. They are a good friend and always brimming with excitement about school, eager to learn and try new things. D is a gifted ice skater, horse rider and golfer with all the potential in the world to achieve their dreams and goals. Thank you, you are amazing!

Appendices

Table 1 – Contextual data of children in our care

Contextual data	2022	2023	2024
Number of children in our care in education up to age 18	461 (including year 13) + 10 pre-reception	496 (including year 13) + 19 pre-reception	468 (including year 13) + 16 pre-reception
Number of Children 18-25 (including Care Leavers)	317	392	494
Number of statutory age pupils Reception - Year 11	303	287	300
Number of schools attended by statutory age pupils	172	177	104
Number of statutory age pupils in Greenwich schools	129	120	126
Number of statutory age pupils in out of borough schools	162	163	150
Number of statutory age pupils not on roll at a school	12	4	24
Number of statutory age pupils living in borough	95	98	108
Number of children living out of borough SAP	208	189	183
% of statutory age pupils in good or outstanding provisions (out of total provision with an OFSTED grade)	92% (243/265)	95% (246/260)	93% (247/266)
Number of statutory age pupils with an EHC Plan/statement	87 (29%)	81 (28%)	82 (27%)
Number of statutory age pupils with SEND Support	60 (20%)	72 (25%)	64 (21%)
Number of statutory age pupils in Greenwich schools looked after by other boroughs	49	44	42

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		
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023

Asian	8	9	8	2%	1%	2%	4%	5%	5%
Black	73	85	89	18%	19%	21%	7%	7%	7%
Mixed	83	94	86	20%	20%	21%	10%	10%	10%
Other	15	32	18	4%	7%	4%	3%	4%	5%
Refused	0	0	4	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%
White	238	239	209	57%	52%	50%	75%	73%	71%

*Total percentages may vary +/- 1%p due to rounding

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		
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
Asian	4634	4711	4929	10%	11%	11%	12%	12%	13%
Black	13488	13369	13120	30%	30%	29%	6%	6%	6%
Mixed	5308	5571	5949	12%	12%	13%	6%	7%	7%
Other	1270	1324	1456	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%
Refused	893	892	1071	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
White	19089	18964	18717	43%	42%	41%	72%	71%	69%

*Total percentages may vary +/- 1%p due to rounding

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

Ethnicity	Greenwich			England		
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
Asian	-8%	-9%	-9%	-8%	-8%	-8%
Black	-13%	-11%	-8%	1%	1%	1%
Mixed	8%	8%	8%	4%	4%	3%
Other	1%	4%	1%	1%	2%	3%
Refused	-2%	-2%	-2%	-1%	-1%	-1%
White	14%	10%	9%	3%	1%	2%

*Total percentages may vary +/- 1%p due to rounding

Table 3 – Attendance of children in our care by demographic groups

Attendance	2022	2023	2024
Number of children and young people aged 0-18	291	235	298
All aged 0-18	92.9%	90.5%	91.2%
Male	93.5%	89.6%	3.5%
Female	92.1%	91.9%	19.1%
Primary	96.7%	96.1%	92.2%
Secondary	90.6%	89.9%	91.7%

KS1	95.8%	93.5%	95.7%
KS2	97.0%	96.5%	88.5%
KS3	93.6%	92.9%	92.0%
KS4	86.7%	83.1%	97.0%
School in borough	90.5%	90.5%	92.2%
School out of borough	94.7%	89.0%	83.8%
SEND	93.1%	90.5%	91.0%
EHCP/Statement	91.3%	91.2%	91.4%
Unauthorised Absence	2.4%	3.7%	89.5%
Persistent absence	17.5%	23.8%	86.8%
Reception	91.6%	94.1%	96.4%

Table 4 – Attendance by placement

Placement Type	N. Children	Attendance
AFC/GFC	138	93%
FFF	35	88%
RES	33	75%
Semi Independent	6	94%
Secure	1	95%

Table 5a – Absence 903 return data

Absence	201718	201819	202021	202122	202223
England	5.0%	5.1%	9.1%	7.8%	8.3%
London	5.3%	5.4%	9.0%	7.8%	9.0%
Greenwich	4.4%	4.1%	7.3%	5.4%	8.7%

Table 5b – Persistent absence 903 return data

Persistent Absence	201718	201819	202021	202122	202223
England	11.8%	12.1%	30.4%	19.1%	20.0%
London	13.1%	13.1%	31.7%	20.1%	23.7%
Greenwich	10.0%	8.1%	27.9%	14.4%	23.4%

Table 5c – % Suspended 903 return

% Suspended	201718	201819	201920	202021	202122
England	11.3%	11.4%	9.4%	9.8%	12.2%
London	11.0%	11.0%	9.6%	9.6%	12.2%
Greenwich	10.1%	11.5%	7.9%	6.6%	12.6%

Table 6a – KS2 Attainment Over Time Children in our Care (CioC) 12 months

KS2 CioC	Greenwich			England			London		
	201819	202122	202223	201819	202122	202223	201819	202122	202223
N. Pupils	29	20	18	3220	3170	3080	340	280	240
% RWM Exp+	28	-	50	37	31	37	42	35	39
% Reading Exp+	48	60	72	49	52	55	55	60	58
% Writing Exp+	31	40	56	50	42	48	54	47	50
% Maths Exp+	52	35	72	51	44	51	58	44	52
% GPS Exp+	48	40	50	53	47	50	59	49	53
% Science Exp	-	60	72	-	54	69	-	57	52
Reading Progress	-0.09	0.82	1.78	-0.23	-0.43	0.04	0.83	-0.19	1.15
Writing Progress	-4.07	-2.08	2.1	-0.82	-0.74	-0.33	-0.54	-0.61	0.48
Maths Progress	-1.31	-3.38	3.12	-0.96	-1.04	-0.62	-0.35	-1.83	-0.08

Table 6b – KS4 Attainment over time children in our care (CioC) 12 months

KS4 CioC 12 months	Greenwich			England			London		
	202021	202122	202223	202021	202122	202223	202021	202122	202223
N. Pupils	47	34	40	5930	5980	6120	810	740	750
A8	23.8	25	21.3	23.2	20.3	19.4	24.7	22	22.2
Basics 5+	-	17.6	-	12.6	11	9.5	16.3	16.2	13.8
Basics 4+	29.8	26.5	22.5	28.8	22.1	20	31.8	25.4	24.7
P8	-	-1.33	-1.46	-	-1.3	-1.26	-	-1.37	-1.31