

LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-committee	
DATE	19 March 2024	
REPORT TITLE:	EDUCATION STANDARDS 2023	
CORPORATE DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR:	Debbie Jones – Interim Executive Director of Children Young People & Education Shelley Davies - Director of Education	
LEAD OFFICER:	Jessica Henk and Miriam Sechere, Interim Heads of Education Services Miriam.Sechere@croydon.gov.uk Jessica.Henk@croydon.govuk	
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Maria Gatland, Cabinet Member for Children Young People & Education	
KEY DECISION?	No	N/A
CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION?	No	Public
WARDS AFFECTED:	All	

1 SUMMARY OF REPORT

CONTEXT

- 1.1 This report summarises the education performance and outcomes for children and young people in Croydon schools for the academic year 2022/23, across all phases from Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to Key Stage 5 (KS5).
- 1.1.1 School and college performance data for the 2022/2023 academic year should be used with caution. In 2022/23, qualifications returned to pre-pandemic standards. Performance measures that are based on qualification results will reflect this and cannot be directly compared to measures from 2021/2022, therefore it is most accurate to compare with 2018-19 data sets.
- 1.1.2 There are ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected individual schools, colleges and students differently.

- 1.1.3 The Croydon Education Partnership (CEP) is now established with representation from across all education provision in the borough. The CEP is chaired by an independent chair.
- 1.1.4 The CEP has agreed 4 priority areas, one of these includes improving outcomes for Croydon's children and young people.

1.2 HEADLINE PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

- 1.3 At the time of writing 94.4% of Croydon primary and secondary schools that have been inspected are judged to be good or better by Ofsted. This is now 4.7% above the national average of 89.7% but 1.7% below the London average of 96.1%. The gap between Croydon and London has narrowed.
- 1.4 The proportion (69.1%) of children at early years foundation stage achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) is above the national average, and equivalent to the London average.
- 1.5 Our KS1 pupils achieved better than national averages in reaching expected standards in reading, writing and maths.
- 1.6 At KS2, 62.9% of Croydon's pupils achieved the expected standard in reading writing and maths which is higher than the national average but lower than London averages.
- 1.7 At KS4, the average Progress 8 score was 0.01, slightly better than the national average of -0.03 but lower than London (0.27) and our statistical neighbours (0.22). The percentage of pupils achieving grades 9-5 in English and Maths in Croydon was 44.9%. This is the 3rd lowest compared to our statistical neighbours, lower than London (54.1%) and slightly below the national average (45.5%). 64.5% of pupils gained at least a grade 4 in English and Maths.
- 1.8 Croydon has a broad KS5 offer, but with a surplus of available places. Our monthly Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET) rates consistently place us in quintile 3 nationally, but the number of NEET referrals is increasing.
- 1.9 Persistent absent rates have increased compared to 2021/22 but remain below the national average.

- 1.10 There were 46 permanent exclusions in 2022/23, at secondary phase, and 5 at Primary. This is an increase on previous years. However, remains under national averages.
- 1.11 There is a focus on improving the quality and monitoring of Personal Education Plans (PEP) for our Children Looked After (CLA).
- 1.12 The timeliness of assessment and issuing of Education Health & Care Plans (EHCP) within the 20-week period was 82% in 2023 which is significantly higher than the 2022 national average (49%).
- 1.13 Performance data can be found in Appendix 1: Education Dashboard (Jan 2024).
- 1.14 Our closest statistical neighbour authorities are Birmingham, Brent, Ealing, Enfield, Greenwich, Haringey, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton and Waltham Forest.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

For the reasons set out in the report [and its appendices], the Children and Young People Scrutiny sub-committee are asked to:

- 2.1 Note this report, and commend the continued actions being taken by all partners to secure improvement in pupil educational outcomes
- 2.2 Note that pupil attainment/school outcome data has now been fully published for the 2022/23 academic year
- 2.3 Note our activities, planned and underway, to improve pupil and school outcomes as set out within this report

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Not applicable

4 BACKGROUND AND DETAILS

4.1 OFSTED INSPECTION OUTCOMES

Ofsted Inspection arrangements

- 4.1.1 The current OFSTED Inspection Framework (2019, with the latest update in January 2024) for schools, applies to all maintained schools, academies, further education and skills provisions, and registered early years settings in England.

- 4.1.1 Due to the pause in inspections in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID19 pandemic, extensions of up to 6 terms have been added to the normal time frame for inspection for many schools. Schools are normally inspected as per the following:
- i. New schools, including academies, are inspected within 3 years of opening.
 - ii. Most good and outstanding graded schools are inspected every 4 years to confirm they remain good/outstanding (no graded judgements). If they are found to have improved or to be declining, they will then get a full inspection with graded judgements within 1-2 years. Some good and outstanding schools will receive a graded judgement due to risk assessment or for quality assurance purposes.
 - iii. Requires Improvement and Inadequate schools are inspected within 30 months.
 - iv. Where any school, irrespective of its current OFSTED grade, is deemed to have serious concerns (for example safeguarding) they may be inspected immediately.
- 4.1.2 We currently have several schools who are due or over-due an inspection in accordance with the above criteria.
- 4.1.3 There is a nationally reported trend of a low proportion of outstanding schools retaining their outstanding status upon inspection against the current Inspection Framework.

Croydon's current OFSTED grading summary

- 4.1.4 At the time of writing 94.4% of Croydon primary and secondary schools that have been inspected are judged to be good or better by Ofsted. This includes both LA maintained and academy schools. This is a substantial increase of 7.2% from the last report. This is now 4.7% above the national average of 89.7% but 1.7% below the London average of 96.1%. The gap between Croydon and London has narrowed

Table 1: Current overall Ofsted ratings for schools as of 11 March 2024

OFSTED judgement	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Not yet inspected
Croydon: Number of Schools	29	73	6	0	N/A
Croydon: % of schools	26.4%	67.5%	6%	0%	N/A
London: % of schools	28.2%	67.9%	3.6%	0.3%	N/A
England: % of schools	15.9%	73.1%	9%	8.8%	N/A

Action being taken to improve Ofsted judgements:

- 4.1.1 Categorisation of schools is undertaken annually (and reviewed if circumstances change) using a combination of risk factors. An appropriate level of support (Universal, Universal+ or Targeted) is offered to improve pupil attainment and Ofsted outcomes.
- 4.1.2 The School Forum has approved Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding of £227,442 a year for 2024/25 to maintain the current levels of support for all schools plus provide additional CPD for school staff covering specialist forums and training. This is in response to the Department of Education's withdrawal of the School Improvement and Monitoring Grant to LAs from 2023/24 and in recognition of the valuable resource and expertise provided to local schools. This also provides a stability of LA service delivery for the next year covering the period to 31st March 2025.
- 4.1.3 Continuing Professional Development has been provided to our primary schools to prepare them for the Deep Dive into reading and mathematics, and in the wider curriculum including deep dives in history, geography, science and art.
- 4.1.4 Ofsted update training is provided at least annually for school leaders and separately for governors. Additional specialist consultancy and training is available as part of the Council's traded offer to schools.

4.2 EARLY YEARS/EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS) OUTCOMES

EYFS arrangements

- 4.2.1 The EYFS Statutory Framework covers all settings and practitioners who work with children from birth to the end of the reception year in school (0-5yrs). There are three statutory assessments for children in the EYFS:
- 4.2.2 All children who attend an early year setting (including a childminder) must be assessed between their 2nd and 3rd birthdays. This is known as the Two-Year-Old Check and assesses whether children are making appropriate progress in the areas of communication & language development; personal, social & emotional development; and physical development.
- 4.2.3 All children in maintained schools and academies must take the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) within 6 weeks of starting in a reception class. This assessment is used solely to measure a school's effectiveness as the results are held for 7 years and then compared to the cohort's Year 6 SATs results.
- 4.2.4 At the end of the reception year, all children will be assessed against 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) which cover the 7 areas of learning and development in the EYFS. This assessment is known as the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP). The purpose of the EYFSP is to support a successful transition to Key Stage 1 and to inform parents about their child's development.
- 4.2.5 Children are assessed as "Emerging" or "Expected" against the criteria in each ELG. Children who are assessed as "Expected" in the areas of communication & language; personal, social & emotional; physical; literacy; and mathematics are deemed to have a Good Level of Development (GLD).

Croydon's latest EYFS outcomes

- 4.2.6 69.1% of children in Croydon attained a GLD in 2022-2023, which is better than national and equivalent to London averages. Whilst much lower than previous pre-pandemic years, this does reflect both the considerable effects of the pandemic on our youngest children, together with the introduction of new ELGs. In addition, LAs no longer have a statutory duty to moderate EYFSP judgements which may have affected the scores. Of the regions, Outer London had the highest percentage of children with a good level of development.
- 4.2.7 There is a GLD gender gap in Croydon, 61% achievement of this measure by boys compared to 74% for girls. This is in line with all children nationally
- 4.2.8 In Croydon, 56.7% children entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) achieved a GLD compared to 70.2% of their peers who did not claim FSM. This 'gap' of 13.5% is the narrowest of all the comparable regions.

Action being taken to improve EYFS outcomes

- 4.2.9 We continue to support early years practitioners to develop their skills in all areas of the EYFS curriculum, with an emphasis on communication & language; personal, social & emotional; and physical development as the cornerstones of learning.
- 4.2.10 Work continues to address the gender gap, particularly in literacy. The final cohort of schools and settings are using "Helicopter Stories" which is proven to support boys' communication, language and literacy.
- 4.2.11 We offer a range of support and training to our early year's settings and practitioners, including curriculum and statutory training, professional development forums and moderation sessions for reception teachers.
- 4.2.12 Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) settings benefit from annual support visits, pre-Ofsted support programmes, including focussed visits on 'less than good' provision.
- 4.2.13 Our maintained nursery schools have a named link adviser and are subject to the same support and categorisation process as our primary and secondary schools.

4.3 KEY STAGE 1 (KS1) & KEY STAGE 2 (KS2) OUTCOMES

- 4.3.1 Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, external assessments did not take place in 2019-20 or in 2020-21. The assessments in 2022-23 were set at the same standard as 2018-19 to measure the effects of the pandemic on pupil achievement. The effects of the pandemic are still being felt
- 4.3.2 In the Summer term of 2023 externally validated teacher assessments took place for at the end of KS1 in reading, writing and mathematics, supported by tests taken during May 2022 in reading and mathematics.

- 4.3.3 Externally marked tests took place at KS2 in reading, mathematics, grammar, punctuation and spelling (GPS) in May 2023, together with externally validated teacher assessments in writing in June 2023.

Croydon's latest KS1 and KS2 outcomes

- 4.3.4 In 2022/23 the percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard at KS1 in all of reading, writing and mathematics in Croydon was 58.6%. This is 2.6% higher than the national average. 7.7% of children reached the higher standard in all three compared with 6.2% nationally. All individual subjects were higher than national averages at both the expected standard and at the higher standard.
- 4.3.5 In 2022/23, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard at KS2 in all of reading, writing and mathematics in Croydon was 62.9%. This is above the national average.
- 4.3.6 Strengths: Croydon attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above national averages in reading, mathematics and writing at both KS1 and KS2 and in GPS at KS2 at the expected standard.
- 4.3.7 Progress scores for KS2 attainment are lower than London averages in all three subjects with writing attainment also slightly lower than national averages (reading and maths progress is higher than national averages).

Action being taken to improve KS1 & KS2 outcomes

- 4.3.8 School Improvement visits challenge and support leaders on the quality of education, including teaching and learning, and provision for specific pupil groups including those with SEND needs and those who are disadvantaged. The number of visits is graduated according to need. School visits include learning walks which often include both lesson visits and book scrutiny for evidence of the curriculum over time. This ensures that any issues are picked up quickly and school leaders are supported with making improvements.
- 4.3.9 Our most vulnerable schools have formally recorded School Progress Review Meetings (SPRM) termly to track progress to a judgement of at least good in an Ofsted inspection. This ensures that appropriate challenge and support is given to the leadership and management of the school to ensure accelerated progress. An element of inspection readiness is introduced into the programme at the appropriate time, and often includes preparing middle leaders and governors for their part in the process.
- 4.3.10 A comprehensive programme of assessment and moderation training is provided at KS1 and KS2 to ensure assessments are robust and accurate. This includes training for teachers who are new to Year 2 and Year 6, and for strong teachers to join the LA team as moderators which builds capacity in their schools as well as for the LA. Moderation clusters at KS1 and KS2 support teachers in developing and assuring their judgements. In line with statutory responsibilities schools' assessments were monitored in phonics in Year 1, and moderated in reading, writing and mathematics at KS1 and in writing at KS2.
- 4.3.11 As of this year, statutory assessments will no longer take place at the end of KS1. Schools are encouraged by the DfE to continue to use optional tests at the end of

KS1 to inform their teacher assessment judgements. The LA have gathered information from school leaders about assessment processes in their schools in Year 2 going forward and are continuing to run moderation clusters to support this process.

4.3.12 Additional writing moderation clusters for all year groups (1-6) will be held with appropriate training for staff throughout the primary phase.

4.3.13 Termly briefings share good practice across the borough in English and mathematics and enable a focus on current areas of priority for improvement, as well as assessment and Special Educational Needs. Strong partnerships will continue to be forged with the local mathematics and English hubs, funded by the government to provide support to schools in these areas.

4.3.14 The Schools Forum agreed funding for 2023/24 and 2024/25 will ensure that the above support can continue without additional funding pressures on either the Council's General Fund or on school budgets.

KEY STAGE 4 (KS4) OUTCOMES

KS4 arrangements

4.3.15 School and college performance data for the 2022/2023 academic year should be used with caution. In 2022/23, qualifications returned to pre-pandemic standards. Performance measures that are based on qualification results will reflect this and cannot be directly compared to measures from 2021/2022.

4.3.16 There are ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected individual schools, colleges and students differently.

National KS4 measures are based upon:

4.3.17 Percentage of pupils achieving at least a grade 4 or 5 in both English and Maths GCSE.

4.3.18 Attainment 8 measure which shows the average academic performance of a secondary school. It is calculated by adding together pupils' highest scores across eight government approved school subjects.

4.3.19 Progress 8 is a 'value-added' measure that indicates how much a secondary school has helped pupils improve (or progress) over a five-year period when compared to a government-calculated expected level of improvement.

Croydon's KS4 outcomes

4.3.20 Overall, Croydon is currently under performing against most national and regional KS4 averages. Whilst progress in Croydon is being made over time to reduce the gap, when compared with other London boroughs we are still behind on all measures.

- 4.3.21 Achievement of Grade 4 or above in English & Maths GCSE: 64.5% of Croydon pupils achieved this in 2023, which is below the national average (65.4%). However, this represents a 3.2% improvement in Croydon compared to 2019 (61.2%), which is better than the national improvement rate at 0.05% (64.9%) in the same period, meaning we have reduced the gap slightly. [GCSE Results by Borough - London Datastore](#)
- 4.3.22 Achievement of Grade 5 or above in English and Maths GCSE: This is considered a 'strong' pass grade. 44.9% of our pupils achieved this in line with the national average (45%). We have increased achievement at Grade 5 from 2019 (40.5%), compared to a national drop from 43.4% at Grade 5 in 2019, demonstrating progress being made to close the gap. [GCSE Results by Borough - London Datastore](#)
- 4.3.23 Attainment 8: Croydon's provisional Attainment 8 score was 45.7, lower than the England average of 46.4 and lower than the London average of 50.6, putting Croydon and Waltham Forest joint at 30/32 of London Boroughs. (Lewisham coming 31st, Lambeth coming 32nd).
- 4.3.24 Progress 8: Croydon (Average +0.01) performed better than the England average of state funded schools (-0.03) and the score confirms that pupils are making the expected level of progress compared to their KS3 starting point. However, there is a decline in Progress 8 from 0.07 in 2019. [GCSE Results by Borough - London Datastore](#)
[All schools and colleges in Croydon - Compare school and college performance data in England - GOV.UK \(compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Action being taken to improve KS4 outcomes

- 4.3.25 School Improvement visits through our traded services challenge and support leaders on the quality of education, including teaching and learning, and provision for specific pupil groups including those with SEND needs and those who are disadvantaged. School visits include learning walks which can include both lesson visits and book scrutiny for evidence of the curriculum over time. This ensures that any issues are picked up quickly and school leaders are supported with making improvements.
- 4.3.26 Promoting teaching and learning partnerships across the borough to develop shared practice and standards between high performing schools and lower performing schools with similar pupil demographics. This is done via targeted CPD (for example focus on programmes for disadvantaged pupils), facilitating school visits and opportunities across schools to share best practice locally and from other boroughs.
- 4.3.27 The Schools Forum agreed funding for 2024/25 will ensure that the above support can continue without additional funding pressures on either the Council's General Fund or on school budget.

4.4 KEY STAGE 5 (KS5) OUTCOMES

KS5 arrangements

- 4.4.1 School and college performance data for the 2022/2023 academic year should be used with caution. In 2022/23, qualifications returned to pre-pandemic standards. Performance measures that are based on qualification results will reflect this and cannot be directly compared to measures from 2021/2022. There are ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected individual schools, colleges and students differently. Therefore, when looking at 2023 data, it is most meaningful to compare against 2019 data given this context.
- 4.4.2 As part of the transition back to the unmodified and full summer exam series, for data comparison purposes, comparison of 2023 to 2019 data is most meaningful.
- 4.4.3 Published data from the DfE for KS5 is now available. We are able to compare across boroughs/ disadvantaged groups. Destination Data for KS5 2022-23 is not released until October 2024.
- 4.4.4 Data and information in relation to 2023 results referred to in this report is therefore published data provided by the DfE.
- 4.4.5 Typically, KS5 students in Croydon enter Level 3 courses (e.g. A Levels) with lower-than-average KS4/GCSE attainment levels, with migration out of Croydon (for example to selective schools in neighbouring boroughs) for post-16 studies.
- 4.4.6 All young people must stay in education, employment with training or training (EET) until their 18th birthday. Those identified as not EET (NEET) must be supported to find and sustain suitable provision.

Croydon's provisional KS5 outcomes

- 4.4.7 A Levels: Local performance remains below regional, statistical neighbour and national averages. Our A level pass rate (95.8%) data suggests that we are below the reported national average of 97.1% demonstrating a decrease in A*-E grades since 2019 (98.2%) The percentage of Croydon students achieving A* Grades has increased however from 5.8% in 2019 to 6.8% in 2023 (discounting CAGs and TAGs years). The average grade in the borough is a C grade, this is in line with our statistical neighbours. The number of A level students achieving 2 or more A level qualifications has risen from 66.2% in 2019 to 69.4% in 2023.
- 4.4.8 Other level 3 courses (e.g. BTECs, Diplomas, T Levels): We continue to have strong performance with high numbers of students achieving high grades in Technical qualifications with the average Tech results being Distinction. This is above the regional London average of a Merit+. Disadvantaged students achieve on average the same tech result as non-disadvantaged students. Our Technical qualification students achieved better than all comparator averages by +0.1 points (statistical neighbours) to +2.54 points (London).
- 4.4.9 Areas of strength: We have individual schools within the borough who are within the top 10 percentile nationally for outcomes.
- 4.4.10 Areas of development: Viability of some school sixth forms and surplus sixth form places - We have a high number of small sixth forms across Croydon who cannot

offer the breadth of curriculum to meet the needs of all their KS4 leavers. With typical entrance requirements for A levels being a grade 6+ including English and maths at GCSE and only 44.9% of students in Croydon gaining a G5+ including English and maths, a 'traditional' school sixth form academic curriculum offer does not meet the needs of a considerable proportion of students. Following the pandemic and the impact of inflated CAGs and TAGs grades on previous KS4 students, this has led to students being on A level courses that haven't matched their current attainment. This has inevitably impacted on A level data 2023. The ongoing focus on raising KS4 attainment will have an inevitable impact on KS5 data.

Whilst introduction of other types of post-16 courses, for example BTECs and T Levels, would enable more students to access suitable post-16 pathways within their school, the nature of these courses in terms of teaching expertise, resources and premises often proves prohibitive for schools, meaning colleges or specialist/niche post-16 providers are better placed to meet the needs of many students.

- 4.4.11 NEET date is not published annually for the September – November period due to the volatility of the cohort and data. In the August 2023 tables, we were position 8 of 30 (2 positions higher than last year), placing us in Quintile 3; the top half of the national standings table. Our combined NEET / Not Known figure was identical to the 2022 results - 4.9% of the total 16/17-year-old cohort. This equates to 230 young people who were classified as NEET and 243 whose status was Not Known.
- 4.4.12 The average NEET and Not Known is a white male who was educated in the borough and lives in New Addington South ward, they make up 61% of our NEET / Not Known cohort. In line with the change in DfE reporting, we no longer capture or report on Gender identity of a young person, but their Sex, in line with [UK Statistics Authority recommendations](#). This is their sex as defined on a birth certificate or gender recognition form. To mirror this, we have replaced the Gender characteristic with the Sex characteristic in our reports.
- 4.4.13 Half of all NEET and Not Knowns are from a White ethnic grouping with 38% of Black or Mixed ethnicity. The highest concentrations of our NEET and Not Known cohorts are in Central and South areas with 30% living in New Addington, Broad Green or Waddon. Approximately 16% of our NEET young people are not available to participate in EET for reasons of pregnancy, caring responsibilities, medical or being abroad – this is a reduction of 4% in the previous year.
- 4.4.14 The number of complex NEET young people referrals is increasing. This is a particular challenge due to the very limited availability of / access to mental health and wellbeing support services. Furthermore, the ceasing of a wide range of post 16 provision (due to the termination of ESFA funding) likewise qualifications that are more suited for those young people who have few or no GCSEs compounded the challenge of adequately supporting young people with multiple challenges

Action being taken to improve KS5 outcomes

- 4.4.15 Improvement of KS5 outcomes across Croydon will be driven by improvement in our KS4 outcomes and therefore the actions being taken as outlined in section 1.5. apply as improvement arrangements for KS3 to KS5 have been aligned.
- 4.4.16 Ensuring the provision of high quality, appropriate careers, information, advice and guidance to ensure all students are on the right KS5 pathway is essential to improving outcomes. Whilst schools and colleges have a statutory responsibility to ensure the provision of this, the LA has historically provided support for this. However, local and national funding reductions in recent years has significantly reduced the resource and capacity for this.
- 4.4.17 We are developing post 16 partnerships and training across the borough through the secondary and post 16 link advisor, specific CPD, forums. This relationship is used as a vehicle to review the local post-16 offer, share good practice, promote collaboration and inform discussions with post-16 providers on their KS5 offer. The responsibility remains with schools with regards to curriculum and deployment of resources.
- 4.4.18 Improving Oxbridge, Russell Group and Top Third Access to University as well as degree apprenticeships is a focus. We are doing this by strengthening partnerships with the widening access teams of Higher Education Institutions and exposing Croydon's young people to the possibilities of university and degree apprenticeships through more networking events. This includes work we have been undertaking with Cambridge University and university outreach workers.
- 4.4.19 Croydon Council brokers a data management, analysis and monitoring tool (ALPS) at reduced cost for local post-16 centres, which includes training sessions. This tool is used to identify areas for improvement and strength, enabling sharing of good practice across centres, as well as supporting pupil tracking and monitoring.
- 4.4.20 We have a small NEET casework team who provide focussed advice and support to help young people into education and training, track young people whose education status is unknown, and one officer dedicated to working with social care colleagues to support CLA/care leavers who are NEET.
- 4.4.21 We continue to produce the annual Croydon Post 16 prospectus [My Choices at 16+ | Croydon Council](#) , now available digitally. This provides details of the full local post-16 offer, plus an enhanced section for young people with SEN, careers information advice and guidance and links to support (e.g. financial) available.

4.5 PUPIL ATTENDANCE

Attendance arrangements

- 4.5.1 The primary objective for Croydon Council is to raise the actual attendance in all Croydon schools in line with the National average and statistical neighbours. This will involve working with all schools and other agencies within the LA, voluntary sector, and regeneration programmes.

4.5.2 The vision that Croydon LA wants to promote in partnership with schools, is based on a fundamental belief that inclusive schools are “Schools to which the teaching and learning, achievements and well-being of every young person matter.”

4.5.3 In May 2022, the DfE published the guidance [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) and [Summary Table of Responsibilities for School Attendance](#).

The guidance gives a clear message that improving attendance should not be the responsibility of one organisation. It should be achieved by working collaboratively and addressing the root cause of the absence.

Improving attendance is everyone’s business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates. They are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn. ([Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)).

Croydon’s current attendance

4.5.4 Historically, Croydon primary school persistent absence rate in 2018/19 was 8.53% which was a decrease of 0.31 from the previous academic year. The primary school figures for the academic year of 2019/20 were not published by the DfE due to covid-19 implications. However, the data for 2020/21 stood at 8.26%. which is better than our statistical neighbours. The data for 2021/22 indicates an increase in persistent absence from the previous academic year of 8.05% however, despite this increase, the data suggests Croydon’s primary school persistent absence rate is better than the national average by 1.91%. Croydon secondary schools’ persistent absence rate in 2021/22 has increased by 11.64% from the previous academic year.

4.5.5 Croydon’s current persistent absent rate in 2022/23 is 22.15% which is an improvement of last year’s 20.96%.

4.5.6 We have had a focussed visit from the DfE on attendance. This was a positive visit which highlighted some best practice.

Action being taken to improve pupil attendance

4.5.7 Croydon LA has commissioned Studybugs which is currently embedded and is able to extract live data feed from schools in line with the Government Green Paper statements on school attendance. This gives Croydon staff members access to live pupil data, which can be used to target needs within schools.

4.5.8 Monthly whole school attendance touch base meetings led by Croydon LA officers have been rolled out to all Croydon schools to support with all whole school attendance matters.

4.5.9 The attendance improvement practitioners undertake individual casework around complex cases of children who are missing out on education. They also promote the use of the Early Help pathway and conducted reviews of whole school attendance practice in schools where this is a concern.

4.5.10 The local authority also supports schools by taking enforcement action, where this is appropriate, against parents who fail to ensure their children attend school regularly. In the 2022/23 academic year 1238 penalty notices were issued for unauthorised absence at school which is an increase on last year by 660.

4.5.11 LA education officers in the Access to Education Team continue to work to improve attendance through individual casework with appropriate cases; whole school support with priority schools; liaison with independent education welfare providers; raising awareness of attendance; and exploring opportunities provided by the Locality Early Help teams.

4.6 PUPIL EXCLUSIONS

Exclusions arrangements

4.6.1 Pupils can be excluded from school either permanently or for a fixed period. These are formal sanctions that occur in response to breaches of the school's behaviour policy and there are regulations and guidance covering their use. Parents have various rights of representation in response to an exclusion.

4.6.2 The DfE publishes the national comparative rates for exclusions from academies and local authority-maintained schools. This data is published annually in the summer following each academic year once it has been validated. The most recent national data release was for the 2020/21 academic year, with internal data adding to the contextual picture.

4.6.3 The data captures three measures, which are broken down by primary and secondary schools. These are:

- The number of permanent exclusions and this as a percentage of total pupil numbers.
- The number of fixed period of exclusions and this as a percentage of total pupil numbers; and
- The number of pupils with one or more fixed period exclusions and this as a percentage of total pupil number.

Croydon's current exclusions

- 4.6.4 There were 46 permanent exclusions from Croydon secondary schools during the 2022/23 academic year. This figure has increased by 19 from last year's figures during the academic year 2021/2022. Post Covid factors have been given by schools as one of the reasons behind the increase.
- 4.6.5 There were 5 permanent exclusions of primary school pupils during 2022/23, which increased from the previous year.
- 4.6.6 There were 15 permanent exclusions of Croydon resident pupils from schools in other local authority areas.
- 4.6.7 No permanent exclusions were withdrawn by schools, however three were reinstated by the governing body.
- 4.6.8 The trend shows that Croydon is still currently below the national average in the number of permanent exclusions from maintained Croydon schools, academies and free schools over recent years as well as the permanent exclusion rates compared with national, London and statistical neighbours which is positive. However there has been an increase of permanent exclusions from previous years.
- 4.6.9 The table below indicates the drop in school-based suspensions in the last two academic year we have seen a dramatic drop of 817 less suspensions/fixed term exclusions.

Table 5: Volume of fixed term and permanent exclusions 2018/19 to 2022/23

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Number of suspensions (fixed term exclusions)	1400	1470	653	2551
Number of permanent exclusions	41	27	27	46
Number of permanent exclusions reinstated	2	0	0	3
Number permanent exclusions withdrawn	4	2	5	0

- 4.6.10 In line with the national situation, Black Caribbean pupils in Croydon still have the greatest level of disproportionately high levels of exclusion from school. Black Caribbean pupils made up 40% of permanent exclusions from Croydon schools during the 2022/23 academic year, but Black Caribbean pupils account for 10.5% of the Croydon school age population.

Action being taken to improve reduce pupil exclusions

4.7.11 The Access to Education Team currently has several preventative models designed to support the reduction of pupils at risk of exclusion. These should be explored before considering the lines of permanent exclusion:

- i. Missing Monday Panel meeting: The purpose of this panel is to help reduce the numbers of children and young people in Croydon who are absent from education, at risk of permanent exclusion or who go missing from the school roll, whilst also ensuring that issues of safeguarding are prioritised by schools in their duty of promoting the well-being of all children.
- ii. The team around the school approach, a multi-agency early intervention support for schools which includes officer visits by both LA officers and partner organisations – supporting all Croydon schools on a range of inclusion matters. This includes support with pupils who are at risk of exclusion.
- iii. School Inclusion Panel and Primary School Forum have been used as a mechanism through which schools, with parental consent, broker managed moves to other mainstream schools or alternative provision settings. Using these mediums means that a pupil does not need to be permanently excluded.
- iv. Frontline support from Attendance and Inclusion Officers - holistic support for pupils and their families.
- v. Provision of exclusions advice and guidance.
- vi. Safeguarding visits consider exclusions within the wider safeguarding context.

4.7.12 Steps are continuing to be taken to work with schools to reduce their need to exclude pupils; this champions a renewed focus on disproportionality of exclusions amongst different groups of pupils. Example approaches includes the team around the school model, which focuses on early intervention support at the earliest point of concern, holistic practitioner 1:1 intervention for pupils at risk exclusion, thematic workshops and group intervention for vulnerable year groups.

4.8 CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER (CLA) OUTCOMES

4.8.1 Due to trauma and significant issues emanating from trauma, the Virtual School works alongside stakeholders, especially social services, to address and to share understanding and knowledge of how to bridge the gaps and ensure that education is an active part of the Care Plan, and to improve the education outcomes of our CLA.

4.8.2 The role of the Virtual School (VS) is to:

- i. Monitor and promote the educational progress and achievement of children looked after and care leavers.
- ii. Ensure that Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are current, relevant and effective.
- iii. Promote and monitor the use of the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG).
- iv. Support schools and designated teachers to develop effective strategies and support for children looked after.

Croydon's Provisional CLA outcomes

- 4.8.3 EYFS – Year R: We have 10 children in Year R, one of who was not in an English school, so is disapplied from the Early Years Framework. Of the remaining 9 children, 2 achieved a Good Level of Development in all 11 areas of reportable development. 3 of the children who did not achieve GLD have an EHCP and are significantly below in all areas.
- 4.8.4 KS1 – Year 1: We have 11 children in year 1, 1 of whom were disapplied from the phonics testing due to their SEND levels. Of the remaining 10 children, 7 passed the year 1 phonics screening and the remaining 3 are being provided with support and intervention by the VS and their schools in preparation for re-taking the screening in year 2.
- 4.8.5 KS1 – Year 2: Of the 8 children in this cohort, 1 was disapplied from the phonics testing due to their SEND levels. 3 children have SEND needs – 1 with EHCP and 2 on school level support plans. 5 of the 8 pupils met their teachers' and schools' own targets for the year, with 1 child passing the nationally expected levels for reading, writing and maths. Of the 3 pupils retaking their phonics screening, 1 passed.
- 4.8.6 KS2 – Year 6: We had 17 pupils in this year's KS2 testing cohort, 3 of which were disapplied from the KS2 testing due to their SEND levels. Of the remaining 14, 57% (8 pupils) were working at the combined 'expected standard' in reading, writing and maths. This is in line with the reported national average for the CLA cohort.
- 4.8.7 KS4 – Year 11: There are 49 young people in this reportable cohort, with 35 entered for Level 1 and Level 2 exams and 25 young people were entered for (Attainment) 8 eligible subjects. 44% of these pupils were forecasted by their schools (in their PEPs) to gain 5 or more GCSEs grades 9 - 4 including English and maths. 40% of pupils achieved grades 9 – 4.
- 4.8.8 KS5 – Year 13: There are 126 in the Yr. 13 cohort of which 26 achieved a Level 3 qualification, 6 young people achieved a Level 2 qualification, 8 achieved a Level 1 and 28 achieved an Entry Level qualification. There are 13 that do not have any results, 45 young people did not engage in education. The high mobility and contextual changes that occur in this cohort which affects the figures regarding no results include:
- Entering care at a late age, sometimes at Year 12 or 13, and no support with previous educational experience
 - Poor transition plans that do not reflect the step up to Post 16 education
 - Mental Health and other health issues
 - Housing
 - Incarceration
 - PPG+ funding ending in Year 12 and lack of support
 - Post 16 educational placements are not trauma trained
 - Exclusions

- 4.8.9 Attendance: There are 597 pupils in the CLA cohort with attendance rates at 95.1% at primary phase and 88.74% at secondary. The 2022/2023 persistent absence data for our CLA primary cohort is 10.67% of the cohort, and 27.23% of the secondary cohort.
- 4.8.10 Exclusions: At the primary phase, there were no permanent exclusions, with only one at secondary phase. 2 permanent exclusions were successful rescinded at secondary phase, which included intervention by the Virtual School.

Action being taken to improve CLA education outcomes

- 4.8.11 Advisory Teachers and Education Advisers hold a cohort of specific year groups for at least 2 years to ensure continuity and stability for the children, young people and their carers.
- 4.8.12 The VS is applying additional support for children and young people with the effective use of the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG+) to promote inclusion, reduce exclusion, ensure quality transitions and to raise attainment. All of this reinforces the Advisory Teachers' relationship building and thus more effective intervention with children, young people and stakeholders.
- 4.8.13 There is a dedicated focus on improving the quality of PEPs, so that they robustly reflect the child / young person's circumstances. Activities around this include delivering high-quality training to Designated Teachers (DTs) [this is via the termly *Arena* programme] and by also continually updating the design of the PEP form so that it reflects the voice of the child or young person. Furthermore, there has been a change in requirement, whereby Advisory Teachers and Education Advisers are required to attend at least one PEP meeting per term for the children / young people in their cohort.

This improvement in completion rate can directly be attributed to a change in approach. Prior to 2020, two colleagues from the Senior Leadership team quality assured a high percentage of PEPs. In 2020, this approach was changed in line with an overall team operations overhaul. Advisory Teachers (ATs) and Education Advisers (EAs) were allocated specific cohorts within the education phases spanning EYFS through to KS5 and were responsible for ensuring PEPs were completed to a specific standard whilst also ensuring that the number of deferred PEPs were kept to a minimum. Deferred PEPs are those that were missing information from the team around the young person or where a PEP meeting did not take place. Furthermore, during the academic year 2020/2021, the assessment category '*Requires Improvement*' was introduced, which enabled more thorough feedback to educational establishments with regards to the quality of the PEP, which in turn increased awareness and support required for the CLA cohort. The table below illustrates the upward trend in PEP quality since 2018/19.

Table 6: PEP quality assurance trends 2018/19 to 2022/23

Academic Year	Excellent Rating	Good rating	Requires Improvement Rating	Deferred Rating
2018/2019	7.05%	52.47%	n/a	40.48%
2019/2020	20.36%	74.56%	n/a	4.97%
2020/2021	22.89%	70.60%	3.11%	3.39%
2021/2022	31.78%	54.64%	10.48%	3.09%
2022/2023	31.41%	54.15%	11.37%	3.07%

Source: <https://epeponline.co.uk/dashboard/vs>

4.8.14 Monitoring and actively responding to pupils' absence continues to be a focus for the Virtual School.

4.9 PUPILS WITH EDUCATION HEALTH & CARE PLANS (EHCP) OUTCOMES

EHCP arrangements and context

4.9.1 We currently have 4018 children and young people (0-25 years old) with Education Health and Care Plans in Croydon. There are approximately 8,941 more registered at SEN Support.

4.9.2 There were 57 EHCPs issued in December 2023, of which 61% were issued within 20 weeks (excluding exceptions), this is better than the national average for 2022 with 49.2% of new EHC plans were **issued** within 20 weeks.

Croydon's latest pupil with EHCP outcomes across all educational phases

4.9.3 Across KS1 the data shows that those with an EHCP achieve lower than our statistical neighbours, London and England.

4.9.4 Progress scores for KS2 and attainment and progress for specific groups of learners, including those with SEND, indicates those with an EHCP achieve in line with our statistical neighbours, London and England.

4.9.5 Latest KS4 data shows that those with an EHCP achieved in line with London and above England in the Progress 8 measure.

4.9.6 Latest figures for persistent absentees with an EHCP show that Croydon performs better than our statistical neighbours and England.

4.9.7 Permanent exclusion rates for pupils with EHCPs are higher than London but lower than the national average.

Action being taken to improve pupils' with EHCP education outcomes

- 4.9.8 In January 2022 the Croydon SEND and AP Local Area Strategy 2023-26 was launched to turn collective ambitions to improve service delivery and outcomes for all young people and children with SEND and AP into a measurable reality.
- 4.9.9 f Autism Education Trust (AET): A considerable number of pupils and students with EHCPs have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Conditions. We are continuing to work with the AET in our Early Years settings to ensure training and resources are available to meet needs. The AET licence continues for a further two years and for all phases of education so that this effective approach will be embedded across all settings in Croydon. This also addresses the needs of the children and young people in a timely way whilst referral and full assessment is completed.
- 4.9.10 Locality SEND Support (CLSS) service, works with Croydon mainstream schools and maintained nursery settings to ensure early identification and intervention for CYP with SEND. CLSS is aimed at better supporting pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in Croydon mainstream schools, by devolving resources to groups of schools in localities across the borough. The objective of this way of working is to ensure that help is provided at the earliest opportunity, by supporting school SENDCOs with rapid identification and assessment, as well as providing advice, training and resources to improve outcomes, resulting in better value for money.
- 4.9.11 CLSS was established in 2020 and has grown to encompass all mainstream schools in the borough. In September 2023, nursery settings in Borough primary schools and maintained nursery schools were included in the work of CLSS. CYP are supported by three Area SEND Leads, who work closely with school SENDCOs to support CYP with emerging special educational needs.
- 4.9.12 CLSS takes a range of forms and includes training and shared expertise across all settings in order to have a positive impact on the outcomes of learners with SEND. CLSS is currently working with the National Association for Special Educational Needs (NASEN) to run a bespoke, Croydon-focussed sustained programme of facilitated sessions and follow-on coaching to support around 20 SENDCOs, Inclusion Leads and Senior Leaders to address Anxiety linked to Trauma, Dyslexia & Social Emotional & Mental Health.

Table 7: Impact of Croydon Locality SEND Support (CLSS) in terms of numbers of Croydon children helped.

In total 3,685 CYP in Croydon schools have been supported since CLSS was established in September 2020 *Figures correct up to December 2023

Type of Support Provided by CLSS	Number of CYP*
Supported without direct funding (advice, signposting, and free resources)	2,174
Supported with CLSS funding for a fixed period of time and returned to school SEND support	848

Supported with continuing CLSS funding	295
Supported with CLSS funding and now moved to EHCP	368

4.9.13 Investment in and increase of specialist provision is enabling more children and young people to attend good quality provision within the borough. Throughout academic year 23/24 we have increased ELP provision by 40 places for primary aged children with ASD and have 2 further ELP developments on course for September 24. Within our special schools we have increased capacity within Red Gates and developed a new pathway for children with more severe and complex needs at St. Nicholas.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 Not applicable

6 CONSULTATION

6.1 This report is for information purposes only – to provide an annual overview of education standards and pupil outcomes – and therefore consultation is not appropriate.

7 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

7.1 This report provides information to support delivery of the following Mayor's Business Plan 2022-2026 outcomes and priorities:

Outcome 3: Children and young people in Croydon have the chance to thrive, learn and fulfil their potential

Priority: Ensure children and young people have opportunities to learn, develop and fulfil their potential

- Enable more pupils with special educational needs and disabilities to attend and thrive in Croydon schools.
- Develop an effective Education Partnership with schools.
- Work with schools to improve support for vulnerable pupils and to continue to reduce exclusions.
- Develop and deliver an Early Years Strategy to ensure every child is given the best start in life.
- Work with all education providers to improve attendance, inclusion and standards for all, so that more of our children and young people can fulfil their potential.

Priority: Work closely with health services, Police and the VCFS to keep vulnerable children and young people safe from harm

- Implement a programme of continuous improvement to sustain the quality of services relating to children, young people and education.