**Newcastle Virtual School Annual Report 2021/22**

**Introduction**

Post pandemic, 2021/22 represented an important year in the development of the Virtual School. Children have accessed school for the full academic year, which gives us the opportunity to establish consistent data sets by which we will be able to monitor progress and set objectives for improvement.

During this year the Virtual School has introduced an electronic personal education plan (EPEP), established a system of enhanced support for the most vulnerable children, taken on increased responsibilities for all children with a social worker and has been part of an Ofsted ILAC inspection.

We are very pleased with the ”good” outcome of this inspection and recognise how the process aided our development through the remainder of 2021/22 and into the year ahead.

Karl Harms. Virtual School Headteacher. 31st August 2022

**Executive Summary**

* The Local Authority was inspected as **“good”** by an Ofsted ILAC inspection in November 2021.
* The position of Virtual School Manager (VSM)has been a successful addition to the school structure, especially in the management of enhanced support for more vulnerable pupils. This has allowed the Virtual School Headteacher (VSH) to complete extended duties with compromise to the duties of the Virtual School.
* Key stage1 children performed better than national comparisons in reading and writing.
* Key stage 2 children made above expected progress **(+0.69)** in writing and performed better than national comparison in all areas.
* Children in Newcastle schools have an increased Attainment 8 score of **+8.3%** since 2018.

* Attendance in Newcastle Schools rose by **4.2%,** taking it to above pre-pandemic levels.
* A system of red case reviews has been established and embedded to provide enhanced support to our most vulnerable students. As a result of interventions, **4** potential permanent exclusions were averted.
* The electronic PEP was introduced on 1st September 2021 and impacted on the PEP completion rate increasing it by 10% to **98.5**% by 31st July 2022.

**Profile of the Virtual School**

On 1 August 2022 there were **690** (+33) children in the care of Newcastle Local Authority. The Virtual School holds records for **610** (+10) of these children and **469** (+12) were of statutory school age. Of these students **189** (+11) were educated outside of Newcastle. Ten percent of children in care were placed more than 20 miles from Newcastle which compares favourably with the national average of 16%.

In 2021 Newcastle looked after **116** (+3) children per 100,000 compared with 67 (0) per 100,000 nationally. Of these children, **51** (-22) had more than three or more places of residence during the year which is below statistical neighbours. (LAIT)

The average time in care during 2021 was three years, with **530** (+19) children being in care for more than a year.

Two hundred and fifty-one children or **41%** (+8%) of the Virtual School roll have an identified special educational need (SEN). Of these **116** (+33) or **16.8%** (+3.8%) have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP. The most common identified need is Social and Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) with **56** (+21) plans in place. This is equivalent to **9%** of the Virtual School and represents a doubling from last years **4.5%.**

**Staff Structure from 1st September 2022**

Virtual School Headteacher

Virtual School Manager

0.5 Service Support Officer

1.6 Business Support

 6 Education Achievement Co-ordinators

**The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers.**

*“The support she received from a member of your staff team, has changed her situation into a massive positive for the young lad in her care. He now attends a special needs school, which is able to meet his needs. This she feels only became possible because of Virtual School involvement.”* (Fostering Under Newcastle)

**Attainment and Progress**

**Key Stage 1**

Attainment in reading has dropped since 2019 to 47.6% and writing to 38.1%. Against national comparisons reading is **3.6%** above and writing **5.1%** above. Maths has dropped since 2019 to 42.9% which is **0.1%** below national comparisons. The trend in phonics has risen by **3.3%** since 2019.

**Key Stage 2**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Reading | Writing | Maths |
|  | Average KS1 points score | Progress scoregreater than or equal to 0 | Average progress score | Progress scoregreater than or equal to 0 | Average progress score | Progress scoregreater than or equal to 0 | Average progress score |
| National | 6.4 | 48.0% | -0.54 | 47.0% | -0.91 | 42.0% | -1.18 |
| North-East | 6.5 | 46.0% | -0.88 | 47.0% | -0.50 | 39.0% | -1.43 |
| Newcastle | 6.4 | 52.9% | -0.16 | 60.6% | +0.69 | 41.2% | -1.18 |

**30** Children in Care (more than 12 months) undertook Key Stage 2 assessments. The combined reading, writing and mathematics score was **+1.3** higher than national comparisons. This progress was not consistent in all areas and was underpinned by a strong performance in writing progress of **+1.5** above national **(**NCER)

**Key Stage 4**

This year has seen a return to public exams, and it is pleasing to report that there is an increase in GCSE performance in our Newcastle Schools.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **CiC in Newcastle Schools** | Attainment 8 Score | % Pupils achieving English & mathematics threshold Grade 5+ | % Pupils achieving English & mathematics threshold Grade 4+ | % Pupils achieving English threshold Grade 5+ | % Pupils achieving English threshold Grade 4+ | % Pupils achieving mathematics threshold Grade 5+ | % Pupils achieving mathematics threshold Grade 4+ |
| 2018  | 21.5 | 15.0% | 22.5% | 25.0% | 30.0% | 17.5% | 32.5% |
| 2019  | 28.5 | 21.4% | 32.1% | 35.7% | 42.9% | 25.0% | 42.9% |
| 2022  | 29.8 | 15.4% | 38.5% | 34.6% | 50.0% | 30.8% | 50.0% |
| Trend | + 8.3 | +0.4% | +16.5% | +9.4% | +20.0% | +13.3% | +17.5% |

**42** Children in Care (more than 12 months) undertook Key Stage 4 assessments. The average Attainment 8 score rose against by **2.0** which is **1.1** below national comparisons. The average Progress 8 score dropped by **1.6** which is **0.20** below national comparisons. (National Consortium of Examination Results).)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2021** | **2022** |
| Cohort size | 51 | 50 |
| English Language graded | 22 | 34 |
| English Language 3+ | 14 | 17 |
| English Literature graded | 31 | 15 |
| English Literature 3+ | 11 | 20 |
| Maths graded | 20 | 34 |
| Maths 3+ | 12 | 17 |

It is important to recognise that not all students are accessing a full suite of GCSE exams. The reasons for this are as complex as the challenges that the young people are facing. To identify all progress, we must look at the results in more detail across the range of qualifications taken and not solely GCSEs at grade 4+.

Students receiving no qualifications dropped from 27% to **9%**

Students receiving less than 5 qualifications dropped from 5% to **1%**

Students achieving 5 or more qualifications rose from 43% to **46%**

Students achieving 5 or more qualifications including GCSE rose from 35% to **44%**

This represents an overall performance increase of **16%,** this matches the drop in children receiving no qualifications.

Unfortunately, **4** students did not receive any qualifications, but this compares favourably with 2020/21 when **14** students received no qualifications and sat no exams.

The percentage of post 16 students who are NEET has stayed constant at **3.5%.** There are fluctuations in the destinations with a trend towards places at local colleges.

**A full table of attainment, progress and results for all key stages can be found in the appendices at the end of this report.**

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***2022-23 Objective: Improve educational progress of individual students by offering targeted support through the EPEP.***

**Educational Engagement**

**Attendance**

*“The Virtual School has recently strengthened the system to track the attendance of children in care and this is beginning to have a positive impact”.*

*(*Ofsted ILAC 2022*)*

This has been our first consistent year of school opening since 2018/19. Attendance for children in Newcastle schools has risen by **2.6%** over this four-year period. Out of authority attendance for 2021/22 was **91.36%.** The collection process wasenhanced by the introduction of a data collection tool that feels information into the central Capita education data base.

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| **Newcastle Schools** | **2018/19** | **2019/20** | **2020/21** | **2021/22** |
| Attendance % | 87.1% | 83.1% | 85.5% | **89.7%** |
| Students over 98% attendance | 143 | 100 | 145 | **129** |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **CLA more than 12 months** | **2018/19** | **2019/20** | **2020/21** | **2021/22** |
| Attendance | 93.4% | 92.8% | 91.9% | **91.2%** |
| Persistent Absence | 14.8% | 14.7% | 18.5% | **15.6%** |

(NCER)

There has been a significant drop of **3.1%** in persistent absence for children who have been in care for over 12 months. This group remains a priority within the Virtual School.

***2022-23 Objective: Reduce Persistent Absence to 12%.***

***2022-23 Objective: Achieve more than 92% attendance for Virtual School.***

**Exclusions and Suspensions**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Suspensions | Permanent | Withdrawn |
| 2018/19 | 108 | 4 | 2 |
| 2019/20 | 115 | 0 | 1 |
| 2020/21 | 112 | 1 | 4 |
| 2021/22 | 123 | 1 | 1 |

Closer supervision and enhanced support have resulted in the reduction of permanent exclusions reaching a position where they need to be withdrawn.

This involves working closely with headteachers, alternative providers, Childrens Social Care and SEN The small rise in suspensions **(11),** may be linked as children are retained in mainstream school settings.

*“The Virtual School works well with schools when there is potential for a breakdown in school placement.”*

*(*Ofsted ILAC 2022*)*

**Enhanced support**

Enhanced support is focused upon children who are experiencing a higher level of challenge in accessing learning. This includes:

* Weekly review by Virtual School Headteacher and Manager
* Attendance by Education Achievement Co-ordinator at care team, strategy, SEN and school meetings.
* Additional financial support, often for alternative provision or staffing.

Children who receive this support have a below 90% attendance for the last four weeks, are in danger of suspension of permanent exclusion, have no school place, a partial offer or have an unmet special education need.

During the year we provided this level of support to **84** students of which **25** were removed from this level of support as the individual situation was stabilized.

**16** students were in year 11 when the summer term ended, and these children will be the focus of continued support through the 16+ team.

**4** students were provided with Alternative Provision placements without the support of an EHCP.

**4** primary aged students were provided with additional funding for teaching assistant support to ensure that school was stable while an EHCP assessment was completed.

***2022-23 Objective: Improve young person engagement to reduce exclusion.***

**Agencies and professionals working together**

**Resource and Care Panel**.

The VSH attends the weekly Resource and Care plan organised by Childrens Social Care. Papers are circulated the day before the meeting and VSH advises on educational considerations around admission into care, change of placements and additional funding request. Notes and actions are circulated to the VS team on the same day. This is a very valuable meeting both in terms of individual children but also to understand themes and developments with education and children social care. It is a strong two-way flow of information and communication.

**Designated Teachers Network**

The Designated Teacher Network meets on a termly basis providing updates on legislation, EPEP, training, Virtual School processes. The virtual nature of this network continues to be a productive environment for discussion and information sharing. On average each meeting has **60** attendees from within and out of the local authority.

Communications with Designated Teachers is enabled by a group email that is administered by business support. This is regularly to inform the network between meetings.

The service to schools website has been updated and includes access to all documents and policies of the Virtual School.

[www.servicestoschools.org.uk/Services/3719](http://www.servicestoschools.org.uk/Services/3719)

“One Carer, told me through the support of Virtual School, the school where her young lad attends have changed their attitude and turned into being very supportive and feels she works closely with the teachers since their intervention.”

(Fostering Under Newcastle)

**Locality Inclusion Panels**

During the year the inclusion team created Locality Inclusion Panels (LIP) and the VSH participates in these six weekly meetings and pre-meeting triage sessions. The aim of these panels is to provide support to children prior to punitive interventions. Many of these children have social workers, and as such the panel is attended by a CSC representative.

In the coming year the VSH will also attend Pastoral Deputies, Team around the School and Special Headteachers meetings

***2022-23 Objective: Continuing inter-agency working through the extended role of the VSH.***

**Personal Education Plans and Resources including Pupil Premium Plus**

On 1st September 2021 the electronic PEP was launched.

By July 31 2022 the PEP completion rate for the year was **98.5%.** This an increase of **10%** on the previous year. In total this accounted for **1641** completed documents.

The Virtual School quality assurance reported in the summer term that **51%** of plans were rated as green.

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| Term | Red | Amber | Green |
| Autumn Term | 40% | 25% | 35% |
| Summer Term | 23% | 26% | 51% |

This represents an improvement in the quality of the plans, in itself it is an indication of an area that requires improvement which we will address through continuing support to designated teachers and social workers through individual support and the designated teacher network

In June 2021 a user survey was carried out across the 669 individual users of the EPEP Following this feedback discussions were held with Egov and updates for the system are scheduled to be complete during the 2022 October half term.

***2022-23 Objective: Discuss with Schools Forum the quality assurance and identification of pupil premium plus against SMART targets in the PEP***

**Pupil Premium Plus**

In January 2021 the LA agreed with Schools Forum to retain and distribute Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) as follows.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Age group** | **Amount per year** | **Arrangements** |
| Early Years | £300 | Paid direct to school where child is educated and not managed by Virtual School |
| Statutory School Age | £2410 | £2410 paid in quarterly instalments to Virtual School by DfE£805 retained for central services.£1605 directed to schools in three termly payments |
| 16 + | N/A | N/A |
| Previously Looked After Child | £2410 | Paid direct to schools and not managed by Virtual School. |

**Centrally Retained Funding**

From the centrally retained funding 64% was used to cover staffing costs. The remainder was used to provide alternative provision, addition PPP payments, tuition and 100 sessions of Educational Phycologist time. This valuable support will be maintained in 2022.

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| **PPP Totals Academic Year 21/22** |
| Term | Amount paid per child | Ncle LA schools | Academies /Other LA schools | G'head LA schools | N'land LA schools | Total |
| Autumn  | £515.00 | £45,193.00 | £168,215.00 | £7,725.00 | £8,240.00 | **£229,373.00** |
| Spring  | £795 - £1,310\* | £57,470.00 | £271,890.00 | £13,515.00 | £13,515.00 | **£356,390.00** |
| Summer  | £535  | £56,183.00 | £154,133.00 | £9,095.00 | £8,025.00 | **£227,436.00** |
|  |  |  |  |  | **Total**  | **£813,199.00** |

\*Spring term payments include any unallocated centrally retained PPP and a double payment for year 11s to support pre-exam interventions.

***2022-23 Objective: Use EPEP to track and monitor impact of PPP on individual student engagement and outcomes.***

**Education Psychology Service**

This year saw a 20% increase in the number of sessions (3 hours each) purchased by the Virtual School. These **120** sessions were allocated following identification during PEP and care team meetings. Referrals were spread evenly across age groups with **11** primary and **10** secondary interventions.

To help gather information and gain a good understanding of need around cases EPs agreed to attend PEP’s and care team meetings. They also liaised with social workers, carers, and young people directly and indirectly where required.

This approach is highly effective and valued, moving forward we will investigate all possibilities of increasing EP support to the Virtual School.

**Support for Children who are Previously Looked After**

The Virtual School attends half termly meeting with other VSHs and Adopt North East working collaboratively to support Previously Looked After Children.

The Virtual School responds to regular requests by parents and schools for advice. These cover a range of subjects from pupil premium plus, school application and SEN There is a need to explore ways in which the VS can promote and extend this support through working with local agencies such as Adopt North-East.

***2022-23 Objective: Increase access to support and guidance for PLAC.***

**Care leavers**

The Virtual School has established half termly meetings with the Careers and Guidance Service focusing upon the 16 plus age group to ensure engagement in education. All CiC have career and guidance support from year 9.

More care leavers are engaging in Higher education, employment and training. There is also a **7%** reduction in NEET which is tempered by a **4%** increase ofcare leavers who are not in contact with services.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Care Leavers** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** | **2021** | **Trend** |
| Higher Education | 4% | 6% | 10% | 8% | +4% |
| EET | 47% | 41% | 45% | 50% | +3% |
| NEET | 48% | 53% | 49% | 41% | -7% |
| Not in touch | 5% | 6% | 6% | 9% | +4% |

(LAIT)

***2022-23 Objective: Increase numbers of in care leavers in education, employment, and training.***

**Leadership**

Through the course of 2021/22 we have continued to establish and embed an efficient system of leadership and governance.

The Virtual School Governing Body (VSGB) meets termly, all meetings are recorded by an appointed LA clerk. These meetings form part of an established reporting cycle to enable transparency and communication.

The VSH regularly reports to the Directors Management Team, Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee and CiC Multi Agency Partnership.

The VSH reports directly to Mark Patton, Assistant Director Education and Skills. A Self Evaluation Form is reviewed termly and forms the basis of this report structure. Forward planning and progress are monitored through a School Improvement Plan. Both documents are linked and shared with the VSGB and Virtual School team.

In September 2022 the VSH joined the Education Senior Leadership Team which represents a significant increase in the involvement of the Virtual School across all education teams.

**Governing Body Membership**

**Role Name Experience**

VSH                        Karl Harms VSH

LA Education        Rebecca Wright Specialist Senior EP

Children’s Social Care        Jayne Forsdike Assistant Director CSC

Primary School               Colin Lofthouse (Chair) CEO SMART Academies

Secondary School              Mandy Marsh Designated Teacher

Co-opted Jane Pickthall MBE North Tyneside VSH

Co-opted Jane Edminson National Lead in Governance.

Virtual School Lyndsey Pilling Parent Governor

Health Gillian Reid CiC Nurse Practitioner

It is proposed that the VSGB membership is extended in 2022/23 to include young person representation and reappoint a community representative.

In July 2021, the DfE announced an extension to the role of VSH to cover the strategic oversight of all children who have or have ever had a social worker. This work does not fall into the remit of this report, but it should be noted that a key component is that the objectives of the VSH are not compromised as a result.

The Virtual School Manger position created in September 2021 has given the VSH the capacity to respond to these extended duties without compromise to the fundamental duties of the Virtual School.

**Priorities for 2022/23**

* Improve educational progress of individual students by offering targeted support through the EPEP.
* Improve attainment for all age groups through a creative use of pupil premium plus
* Work with Schools Forum to develop the use of PPP within the EPEP, creating a more focused approach on the need of the individual CiC.
* Improve attendance monitoring by embedding the Capita out of area attendance monitoring tool in all schools.
* Co-produce a three-year attendance strategy with schools and CSC.
* Achieve more than 92% attendance for the Virtual School.
* Increase inter-agency working/understanding/communication through the extended role of the VSH.
* Develop bespoke strategies and interventions to engage persistently absent young people.
* Improve access to support and guidance for PLAC.
* Increase numbers of in care leavers in education, employment, and training.

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| **Acknowledgments** |
| The following sources were used to inform the creation of this template:  |
| Ofsted framework  |
| <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-local-authority-childrens-services-from-2018/inspecting-local-authority-childrens-services> |
| Department for Education |
| <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children> |

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| **Children in Care Pupils** | **National** |  | **Newcastle** |  | **Difference to National** |
| **Early Years** | **2018** | **2019** | **2022** | **Impact 2019-22** |  | **2018** | **2019** | **2022** | **Impact 2019-22** |  | **2018** | **2019** | **2022** |
| Good Level of Development | 46.0% | 48.0% | 40.0% | -8.0% |   | 20.0% | 50.0% | 28.6% | -21.4% |   | -26.0% | +2.0% | -11.4% |
| **Phonics** | **2018** | **2019** | **2022** | **Impact 2019-22** |  | **2018** | **2019** | **2022** | **Impact 2019-22** |  | **2018** | **2019** | **2022** |
| Year 1 | 63.0% | 64.0% | 60.0% | -4.0% |   | 75.0% | 46.7% | 50.0% | +3.3% |   | +12.0% | -17.3% | -10.0% |
| **KS1** | **2018** | **2019** | **2022** | **Impact 2019-22** |  | **2018** | **2019** | **2022** | **Impact 2019-22** |  | **2018** | **2019** | **2022** |
| Reading | 51.0% | 52.0% | 44.0% | -8.0% |   | 62.5% | 66.7% | 47.6% | -19.1% |   | +11.5% | +14.7% | +3.6% |
| Writing | 42.0% | 43.0% | 33.0% | -10.0% |   | 75.0% | 66.7% | 38.1% | -28.6% |   | +33.0% | +23.7% | +5.1% |
| Maths | 49.0% | 49.0% | 43.0% | -6.0% |   | 75.0% | 66.7% | 42.9% | -23.8% |   | +26.0% | +17.7% | -0.1% |
| **KS2** | **2018** | **2019** | **2022** | **Impact 2019-22** |  | **2018** | **2019** | **2022** | **Impact 2019-22** |  | **2018** | **2019** | **2022** |
| Reading, Writing & Maths | 35.0% | 37.0% | 32.0% | -5.0% |   | 33.0% | 57.0% | 33.3% | -23.7% |   | -2.0% | +20.0% | +1.3% |
| Reading | 51.0% | 49.0% | 52.0% | +3.0% |   | 52.0% | 61.0% | 40.7% | -20.3% |   | +1.0% | +12.0% | -11.3% |
| Writing (TA) | 49.0% | 50.0% | 43.0% | -7.0% |   | 52.0% | 70.0% | 44.4% | -25.6% |   | +3.0% | +20.0% | +1.4% |
| Maths | 47.0% | 51.0% | 45.0% | -6.0% |   | 48.0% | 65.0% | 40.7% | -24.3% |   | +1.0% | +14.0% | -4.3% |
| GPS | 50.0% | 53.0% | 48.0% | -5.0% |   | 71.0% | 70.0% | 40.7% | -29.3% |   | +21.0% | +17.0% | -7.3% |
| Reading Progress | -0.2 | -0.2 | -0.3 | -0.1 |   | -0.1 | 2.0 | -1.0 | -3.0 |   | +0.1 | +2.2 | -0.6 |
| Writing Progress | -0.8 | -0.8 | -0.7 | 0.1 |   | -0.7 | 2.4 | 0.8 | -1.6 |   | +0.1 | +3.2 | +1.5 |
| Maths Progress | -0.8 | -1.0 | -1.0 | 0.0 |   | -0.2 | 1.2 | -1.7 | -2.9 |   | +0.6 | +2.2 | -0.7 |
| **KS4** | **2018** | **2019** | **2022** | **Impact 2019-22** |  | **2018** | **2019** | **2022** | **Impact 2019-22** |  | **2018** | **2019** | **2022** |
| Attainment 8 Score | 18.8 | 19.1 | 26.5 | 7.4 |   | 20.9 | 23.4 | 25.4 | 2.0 |   | 2.1 | 4.3 | -1.1 |
| Progress 8 Score | -1.2 | -1.23 | -1.01 | 0.22 |   | -1.23 | -1.05 | -1.21 | -0.16 |   | -0.03 | 0.18 | -0.20 |
| Entries in all EBacc | 8.7% | 9.4% | 13.0% | 3.6% |   | 17.1% | 12.0% | 9.4% | -2.6% |   | +8.4% | +2.6% | -3.6% |
| EBacc APS | 1.47 | 1.50 | 2.17 | 67.0% |   | 1.67 | 1.78 | 2.00 | 22.0% |   | 0.20 | 0.28 | -0.17 |
| Achieving English & Maths Grade 5+ | 7.7% | 7.3% | 15.0% | 7.7% |   | 8.6% | 12.0% | 9.4% | -2.6% |   | +0.9% | +4.7% | -5.6% |
| Achieving English & Maths Grade 4+ | 17.5% | 18.0% | 31.0% | 13.0% |   | 25.7% | 16.0% | 28.1% | 12.1% |   | +8.2% | -2.0% | -2.9% |
| Achieving English Grade 5+ | 16.0% | 16.0% | 27.0% | 11.0% |   | 22.9% | 22.0% | 31.3% | 9.3% |   | +6.9% | +6.0% | +4.3% |
| Achieving English Grade 4+ |   |   | 41.0% | 41.0% |   |   |   | 43.8% | 43.8% |   | 0.0% | 0.0% | +2.8% |
| Achieving Maths Grade 5+ | 12.0% | 11.0% | 19.0% | 8.0% |   | 17.1% | 16.0% | 15.6% | -0.4% |   | +5.1% | +5.0% | -3.4% |
| Achieving Maths Grade 4+ |   |   | 37.0% | 37.0% |   |   |   | 31.3% | 31.3% |   | 0.0% | 0.0% | -5.7% |

**All data is based on the outcome measures for children looked after continuously for at least 12 months at 31 March. This matches with the dataset DfE publish where this definition is used because 12 months is considered an appropriate length of time to gauge the possible association of being looked after on educational attainment.**

**2022 data is taken from NCER**

**2022 Emerging National is based on 127 LAs who have imported the 903 return into NCER collection**