



Westmorland
& Furness
Council



Westmorland and Furness Virtual School Annual Report

Academic Year 2024/25





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1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report details and evaluates the work of Westmorland & Furness Virtual School from September 2024 to August 2025, sharing the educational outcomes of the cohort and setting out our key priorities for the academic year 2025/26.

1.2 All local authorities in England must appoint a Virtual School Headteacher, whose statutory duties are set out in the 2018 legislation “Promoting the Education of Looked-after Children and Previously Looked-after Children”. The Virtual School Headteacher works to promote the educational achievement of the children in care to that local authority, wherever they live or are educated. In Westmorland & Furness, we have a Virtual School team who support the Headteacher in fulfilling these duties.

1.3 Westmorland & Furness Virtual School is statutorily responsible for the support of children and young people in care between the ages of 4 and 18 and from the age of 2 if they attend a registered childcare setting. We monitor and support them as if they are a single cohort of children – a “virtual school”. We also provide advice, support and training to professionals and parents/guardians of previously looked-after children, such as those who are adopted or on Special Guardianship Orders.

1.4 We have a clear focus on raising educational aspirations, closing the attainment gap between our children and their peers and being ambitious, proactive corporate parents. We do not replace the schools which our children attend; they remain responsible for improving the rates of progress and educational outcomes of children in care on their roll. With effective support, use of data and taking a lead role in our children's Personal Education Plan (PEP) process, we will work closely with schools and social workers to ensure the best practice is in place for our children and thus support them to achieve the best outcomes possible

The role of the Virtual School is to hold schools to account in relation to the following:

- The educational provision in place for our children
- Aspirations for their outcomes
- Setting and reviewing termly high-quality SMART targets on their PEPs
- Use of the Pupil Premium Plus Grant
- Attendance
- Reduction of suspensions and the need to find alternatives to permanent exclusions

1.5 The Virtual School is part of the Children Services Directorate. The Virtual School Headteacher is line-managed by the Assistant Director for Education and Inclusion. We are accountable to the Corporate Parenting Board and in addition, we have a Virtual School Governing Body to provide additional support and challenge to our work.

2. Introduction from the Virtual School Headteacher

The academic year of 2024/25 has been my first full academic year leading the Virtual School and being a part of Westmorland & Furness Council. It has been an exciting year with much to celebrate alongside developments and solutions to the challenges we face every day in the support of all our children and young people.

Nationally, the role of Virtual Schools has developed hugely over the past decade, from the introduction of statutory duties in terms of overseeing the education of looked after children and management of Pupil Premium funding, to an extension to oversee the education of previously looked after children and children in need and, most recently, children in kinship care arrangements (September 2024). In the incoming academic year 2025/26 we will be statutorily responsible for the educational support for all statutory school aged children with a social worker. To enable us to do this, we have recruited additional capacity to the team whose roles will have a focus on these wider duties.

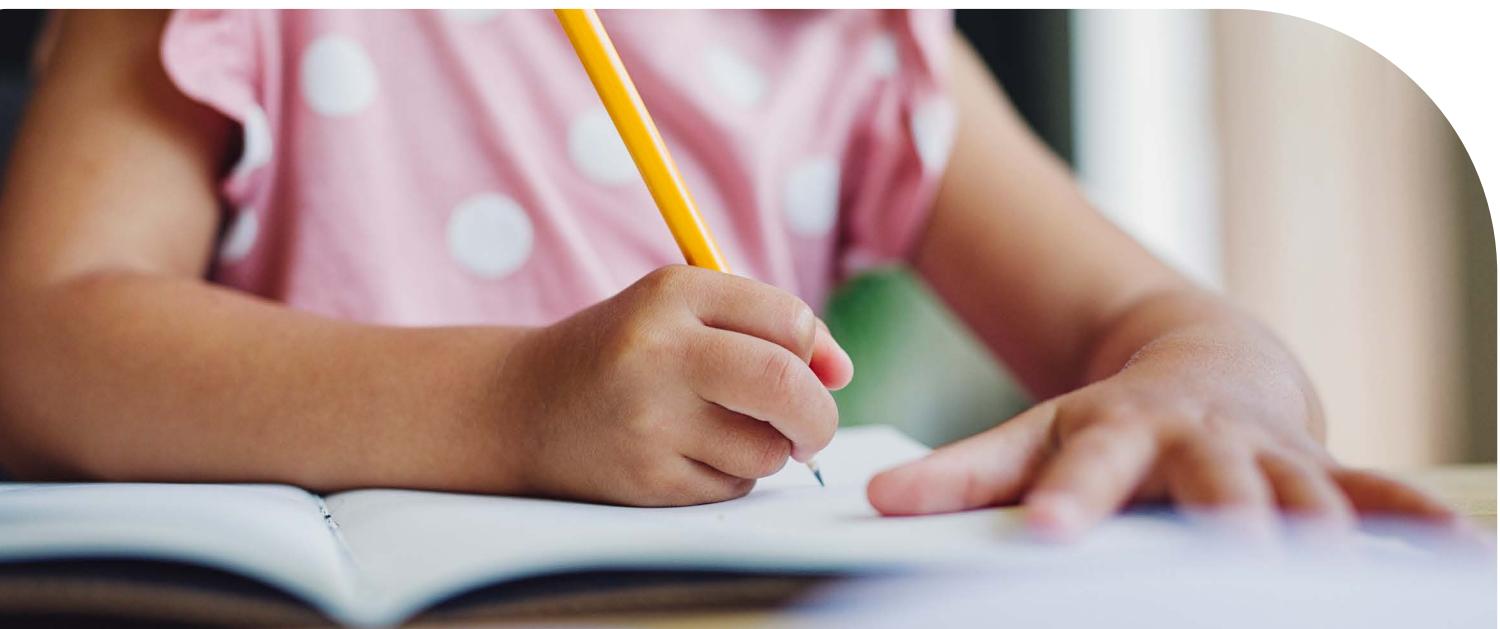
There has been much to celebrate this year, with individual children gaining places at universities, passing their driving test or taking part in local gymnastic competitions. Our first cohort of professionals working across and beyond our education landscape to successfully graduate and gain their Diplomas in Trauma Informed Practice, the success of which means we have an even larger second cohort beginning their diploma journey in October 2025.

I find my job a joy and a privilege and I look forward to continuing to build relationships with colleagues across our system to ensure that we make a difference for all our Virtual School children and young people.



Sarah Campbell-Roscoe

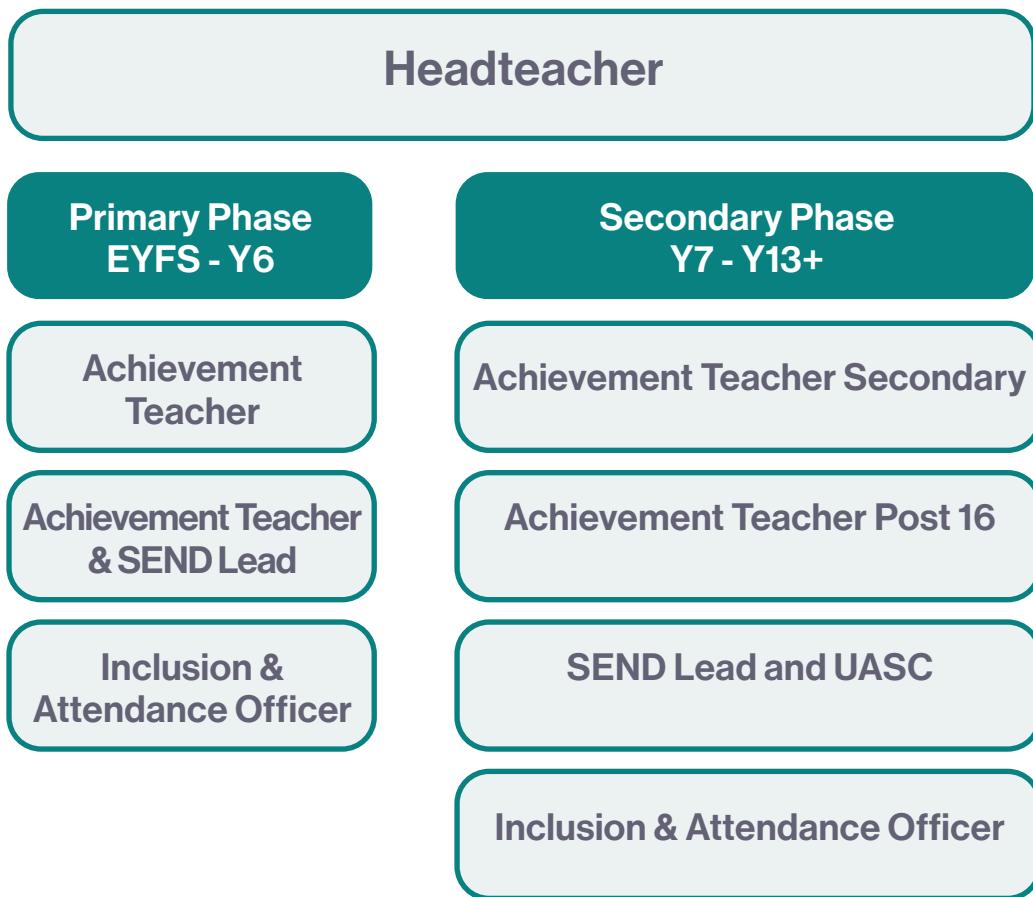
Westmorland & Furness Virtual School Headteacher
August 2025



3. Our Virtual School 2024/25

3.1 Westmorland and Furness Council has an established Virtual School Team who work effectively across the local area and nationally to engage with the wider school system.

3.2 Our Virtual School staffing structure for the last academic year is detailed in the diagram below:



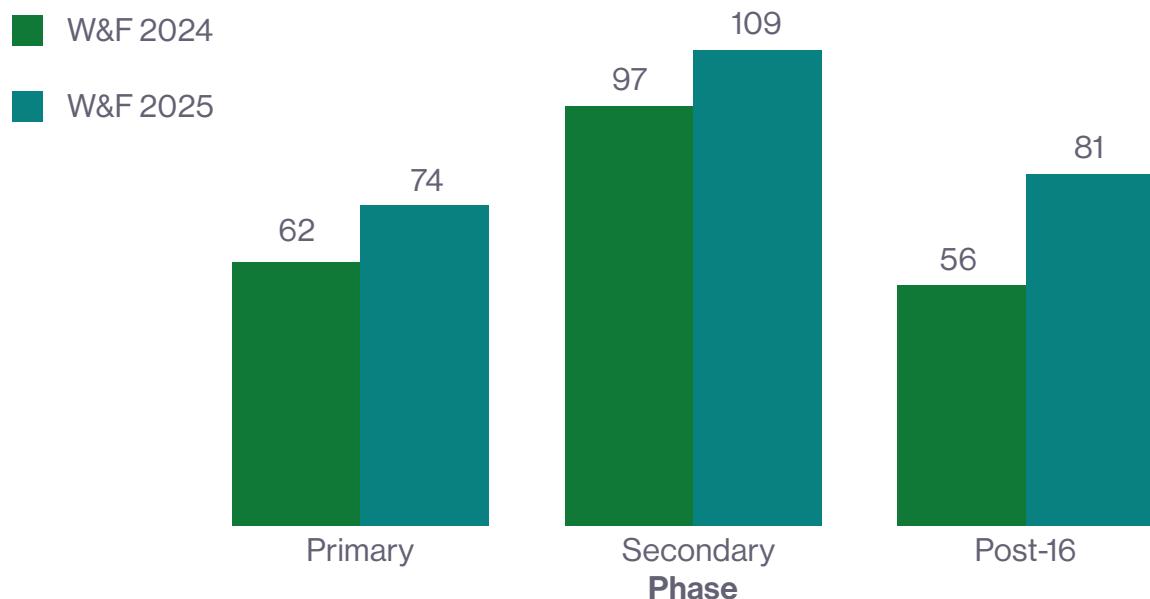
3.3 The team is now working in a Primary Schooling Phase and a Secondary/Post-16 means that the team's roles and responsibilities have greater clarity, enabling professionals to contact the right team member, avoiding any delay. In this academic year there has been one new addition to the team who has taken on the role of achievement teacher in the Secondary Phase.

3.4 September 2025 will see the introduction of two new members of staff to the Virtual School Team. Two Positive Engagement Officers (PEOs) will begin to work with our Cared for Children and our Care Experienced young people, with the intended impact of ensuring our young people are in education employment and training through targeted. These roles also support the developments of the new statutory requirements for our children and young people with a social worker.

4. Our Children and Young People

4.1 Due to the nature of our Cared for Children's lives, this is a transient group with numbers fluctuating throughout the year. At the end of the 2024/25 academic year the Virtual School had 182 Cared for Children of statutory school age, a 14% increase from 159 at the end of the previous academic year. This rise is being seen by other North West Virtual Schools and nationally, with an increase of children and young people becoming cared for. When we include our post-16 young people, the cohort size is 264. The Virtual School now maintains support for pupils beyond their 18th birthday and until the end of their Y13 academic year which accounts for 40 of those post-16 young people.

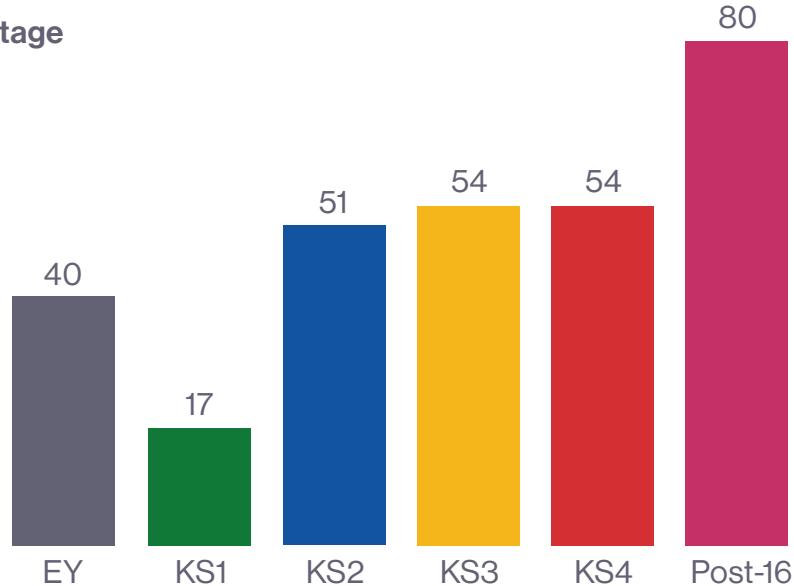
Pupils by phase



4.2 Almost 70% of our post-early years cohort have been looked after for 12 months or longer as of 31 March 2025. As you would expect, the highest proportion of 12 months+ children is in the post-16 group, whilst the figure for primary school pupils is around 56%. Only 31% of our 36 pre-school pupils have been in care for more than 12 months.

4.3 The chart below shows our children broken down by Key Stage. This shows that we have more children of secondary school age, a growing trend nationally, reflecting that young people come into care as older children and teenagers, and others who leave care at a younger age. We are increasing our support for our pre-school children and working closely with our Early Years Foundation Stage Team in the Learning Improvement Service. Research shows that support with children's education as early as possible is key to our children's lifelong outcomes.

Our pupils by key stage

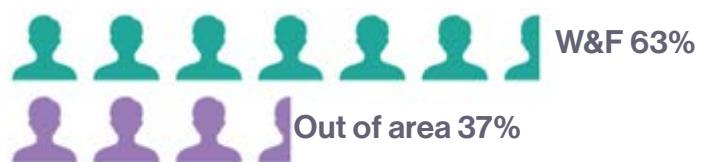


4.4 More of cohort are boys (59%) than girls. This is the case nationally, with the most recently published data showing that boys making up 57% of CLA on 31 March 2024.

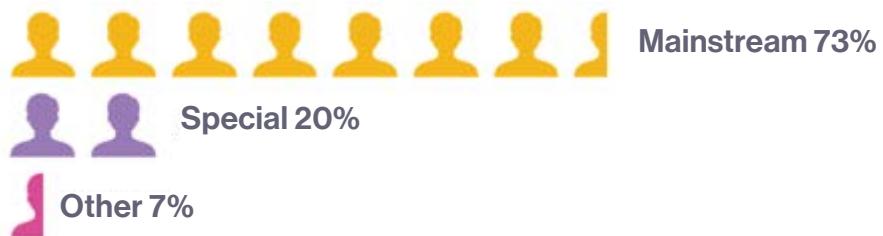
4.5 The majority of our children live in foster or residential placements. Outcomes for children placed in residential provision or with parents are typically lower than those placed in foster care, therefore the Virtual School ensures that there is additional support for professionals working to support these children and young people including being present at PEPs and additional professional's meetings.



4.6 63% of our primary and secondary aged children are educated within Westmorland and Furness. Of the 67 educated out of area, 44 are educated in one of the neighbouring authorities of either Cumberland, Lancashire or North Yorkshire. The Virtual School's support for children and young people out of borough and professionals working directly with them is the same and more as for those who are Westmorland & Furness educated. We prioritise our out of borough schools for training opportunities and ensure that we attend all our children's PEPs. One example of the Virtual School's support here is on our Year 11 GCSE cohort, where we have young people from Somerset to Carlisle, where we gained the best results seen so far.



4.7 73% of our primary and secondary age pupils attend a mainstream setting. Of the remaining students, 20% attend either a LA or independent special school, whilst 7% are in some other form of setting such as an alternative provision or have a specialist package of educational support as agreed by all professionals.



4.8 The statutory guidance 'Promoting the education of looked after children' states that schools judged by Ofsted to be 'Good' or 'Outstanding' should be prioritised for cared for children in need of a new school and that, unless there are exceptional, evidence-based reasons, Cared for Children should never be placed in a school judged to be 'Inadequate'. Where a child already attends a school which is judged to be less than 'Good' before becoming looked after or where the school receives a lower grade at inspection while the child is already at the school, the Virtual School Head must consider whether a fall in Ofsted grading would justify disrupting a child's education with a school move.

4.9 Over 93% of our children at Ofsted rated schools are at an establishment judged to be Good or Outstanding. No children attend a school judged inadequate and for those in provisions judged to be Requiring Improvement we attend all PEP meetings and ensure a termly in person visit.



5. Outcomes and Attainment

5.1 Introduction and Overview

When considering the data presented below, it is important to be aware of two factors. Firstly, the headline data should be treated with care, as cohorts smaller than 30 children and young people result in volatility in terms of outcomes and secondly, that 2024/25 data is provisional at this point.

5.2 Celebrations

- Three students have secured a place at university with one more beginning a foundation degree at Kendal College.
- This year's Year 11 pupils achieved the best GCSE results for our Westmorland and Furness Virtual School so far.
- One of our Year 11s who attended Chetwynde School in Barrow was in the top 3 of the highest achieving for the school. She will be joining Ulverston Victoria High School's sixth form with future aspirations for university.



Photo provided by Chetwynde School, South Cumbria Multi-Academy Trust.

- 43% of our Year 6 cohort achieved the expected standard or higher in reading, writing and maths. This is 9% higher than the provisional national figure for the CLA cohort and, again, our best results since Westmorland and Furness Council was formed.

5.3 Developments for academic year 2024/25

- We have developed systems to ensure that Virtual School attainment data is reliable and robust.
- We have implemented a new team staffing structure to enable oversight of each educational phase to have a more focused impact on our children's attainment.
- Our Virtual School Headteacher has taken responsibility for Year 11 outcomes following a disappointing outcome in 2023/24.
- We have implemented a new system to collate GCSE results on the day from all schools. This meant that by 1pm we had all 21 children's results returned, ensuring that the right support was in place where necessary.

5.4 Developments for academic year 2025/26

- We will have even greater focus in PEPs for English, Maths, attendance and social, emotional and mental health.
- We will support foster carers to provide a language-rich environment for our pre-school children including a specific reading project led and supported by the Virtual School.
- We will develop relationships with early years providers and colleagues within the LIS to support the improvement of early years outcomes.
- We will focus on developing reading and improving outcomes within Key Stages 1-3 using Literacy Gold.
- We will expand our results day process to our Key Stage 5 students following the success of our GCSE results collection this year.

5.5 The Data

Full breakdown of attainment data by individual cohorts can be found in Appendix 1. All attainment data provided is provisional for 2024/25. The exception to this is KS4 where 2024/25 provisional figures are not yet available; final 2023/24 figures have been used in their place. Unless otherwise stated, figures are for the whole Virtual School cohort, including those in care for less than 12 months.

Cohort	W&F CLA All	W&F CLA 12m+	NCER National CLA All*	NCER National CLA 12m+*
GLD	14% (Cohort: 7)	0% (Cohort: 1)	41%	43%
Phonics	20% (Cohort: 5)	0% (Cohort: 1)	57%	58%
KS2 RWM	43% (Cohort: 14)	50% (Cohort: 8)	34%	35%
KS2 Reading	50% (Cohort: 14)	50% (Cohort: 8)	51%	52%
KS2 Writing	64% (Cohort: 14)	63% (Cohort: 8)	44%	45%
KS2 Maths	50% (Cohort: 14)	63% (Cohort: 8)	46%	47%
KS4 English & Maths 4+	38% (Cohort: 21)	35% (Cohort 20)	17%	18%
KS4 English & Maths 5+	24% (Cohort: 21)	20% (Cohort 20)	8%	9%
KS4 English 4+	48% (Cohort: 21)	40% (Cohort 20)	24%	25%
KS4 English 5+	48% (Cohort: 21)	45% (Cohort 20)	16%	17%
KS4 Maths 4+	60% (Cohort: 21)	55% (Cohort 20)	22%	24%
KS4 Maths 5+	25% (Cohort: 21)	20% (Cohort 20)	11%	13%

Early Years Foundation Stage

5.6 One child achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD) this year. A few children were only one goal away from achieving GLD and we will work with those children's schools to ensure that they are able to narrow the gap in the coming academic year. For those who were further away from achieving GLD, the areas of difficulty were literacy and maths. Our work in the coming year with colleagues in the Learning Improvement Service will explore this further. Two of the children are SEND with one on SEN Support and the other holding an EHCP. Some of our reception-aged children are also new to care or have recently moved to a new placement which will have disrupted their education.

Phonics

5.7 One child passed their Year 1 Phonics screening test this year. Two of the cohort were disapplied due to SEND, whilst all but one of the cohort experienced significant disruption during this academic year. We will work with schools and make use of Literacy Gold to put in additional support for the pupils who did not pass their phonics screening, helping them to reach the expected standard by the end of Year 2.

Key Stage 2

5.8 Our children achieved improved Key Stage 2 results on last year. Particularly successful was Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling, where 64% of the cohort achieved the expected standard or above, while 21% of the cohort achieved the higher standard. Within this cohort, six of the 14 pupils experienced significant disruption during the academic year. Despite this, two of these were still able to achieve the expected standard in RWM. One of our pupils successfully achieved the higher standard in English.

Key Stage 4

5.9 Our Year 11 pupils achieved much improved results when compared to last year's results. The percentage of children receiving grades 4 or above in English and Maths saw a significant increase over last year, while five of our children achieved grades 5 and above for both English and Maths (24%). A particular success was in Maths, where 60% of children achieving grades 4 and above. Notably, three of our year 11s have an EHCP and seven receive SEN Support.

Key Stage 5

5.10 Three of our children were entered into A Levels this year, two of whom have gone on to secure a place at university. In addition, two of our children completed Level 3 qualifications, with one planning to take up a place at university and the other set to begin a foundation degree at Kendal College.

5.11 Other qualifications our Year 13's successfully achieved were Entry level Maths and English with all those who passed these exams now being supported into their next steps into Education, Employment or Training (EET).

6. Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

6.1 Introduction and Overview

Statutory guidance from the DfE makes it clear that a termly PEP must be part of the care plan for Cared for Children. PEPs are an evolving record of what needs to happen to ensure that our children make at least expected progress and to fulfil their potential in school and beyond.

6.2 Celebrations

- Through our drive to improve outcomes for our Cared for Children, our working relationships with education settings, particularly designated teachers, have developed exponentially over this academic year.
- PEP completion rates have been consistently high this year.
- We have improved the completion rate of our PEPs at Post-16.
- The proportion of PEPs graded 'outstanding' during quality assurance processes has increased.
- Our Designated Teacher Webinars are now very well attended and valued by schools and colleges.

6.3 Developments for academic year 2024/25

- We have introduced termly Designated Teacher Webinars which have resulted in the development of strong relationships between us and schools that enable supportive and the more challenging conversations where aspirational targets are not present or universal provision has been funded by PPG+.
- We have begun to embed a culture of aspiration across the services who support our children through our robust PEP process.
- We have introduced systems and processes to develop consistency and best practice for PEPs.
- We have supported the improvements of the system we use for our e-PEPs.
- We have established an independent PEP QA Panel.

6.4 Developments for academic year 2025/26

- We will improve the EYFS PEP completion rate.
- We will increase and ensure representation of Barrow and FE educational settings at the PEP QA Panel meetings.
- We will increase representation of social care colleagues at PEP QA Panel meetings.
- We will develop targeted analysis of specific areas that will lead to improvement in PEP quality outcomes.
- We will improve attendance of social workers and pathway advisors at Post-16 PEPs.

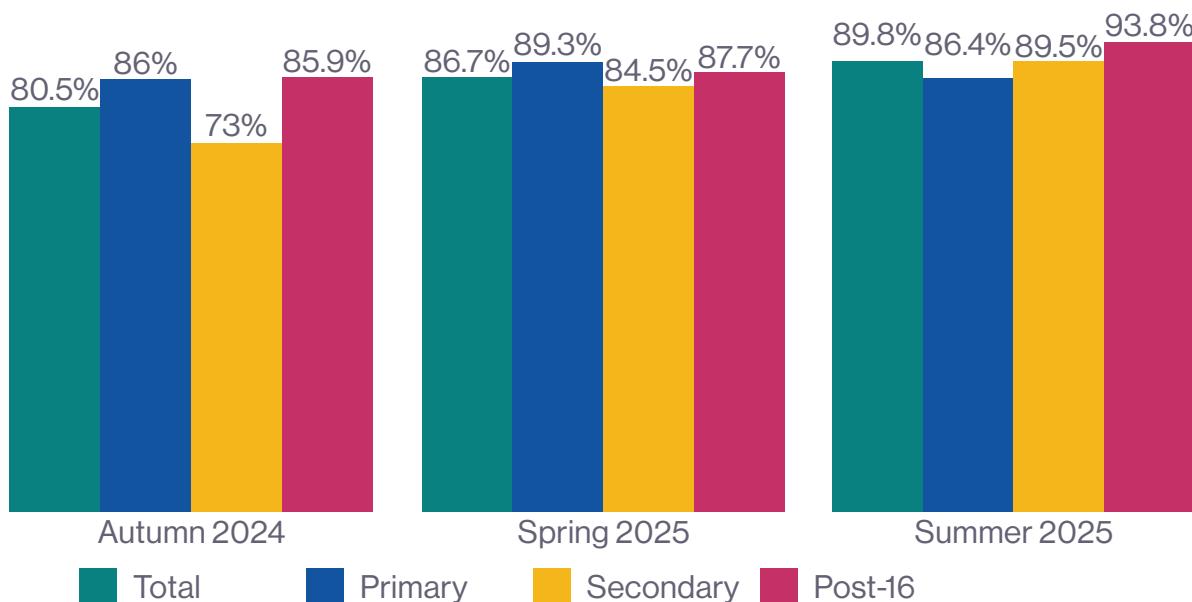
6.5 The Data

PEP Completions

6.6 A small number of children joined the Virtual School late in the summer term and will have their first PEP in the coming autumn term. Despite this, 98% of PEPs have been graded, with a few awaiting final sign-off to be considered completed. Ongoing work includes team accountability and oversight from the Virtual School Headteacher, as well as dialogue with educational settings around best practice and working within statutory timeframes.

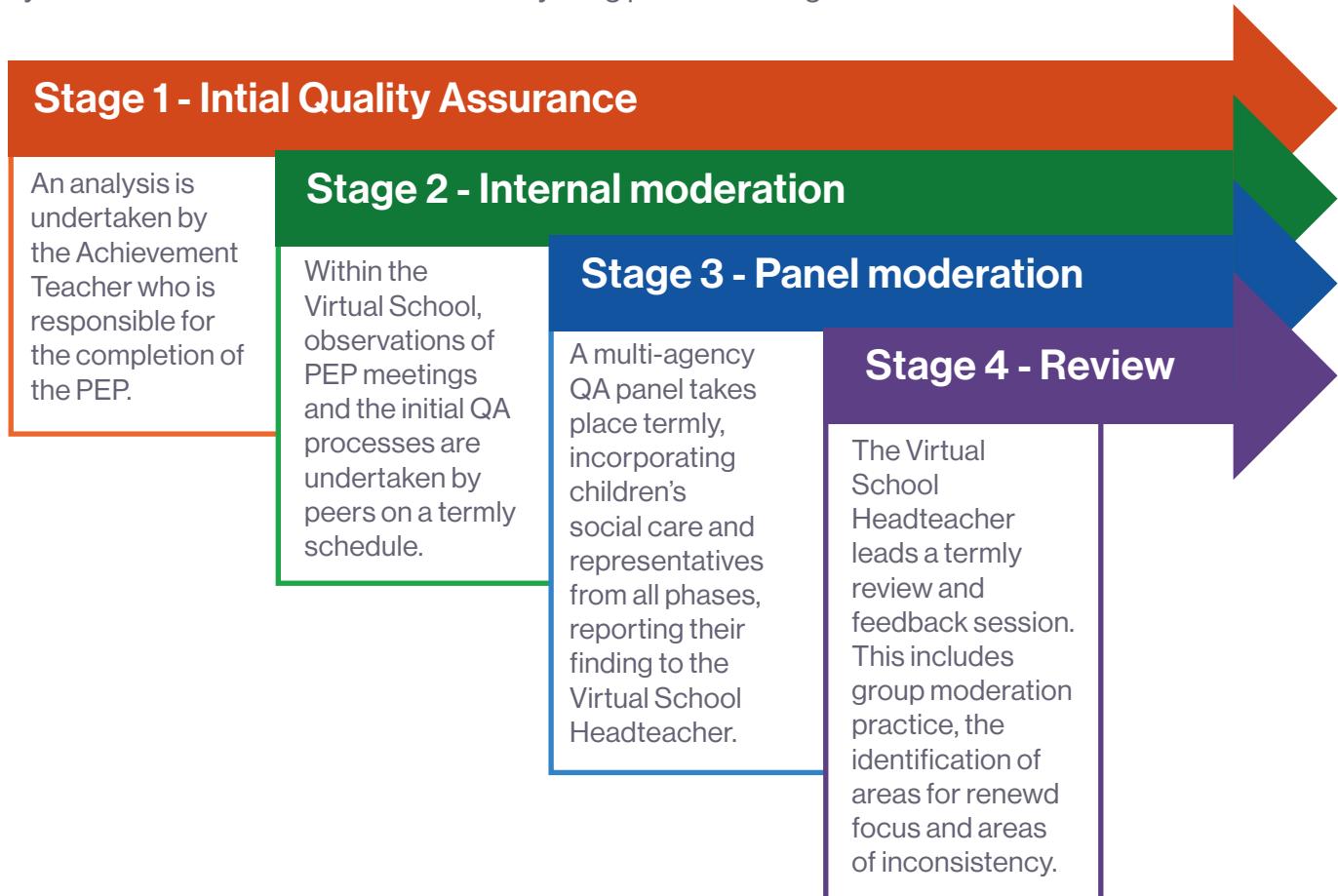
6.7 PEPs for pre-school children are not statutory unless they are in a registered provision. Our primary phase team will make this an area of development for us as we support children transitioning into formal education.

PEP Completions by Term (including those awaiting sign-off)



PEP Quality Assurance

6.8 The quality of PEPs is judged against regularly reviewed, pre-agreed criteria which is made available to all involved in the PEP process. A new quality assurance procedure has been introduced this year, with the aim of ensuring increased impact for children, ensuring high quality PEPs are in place for all which are aspirational and reflect best practice in terms of PPG spend upon completion, the achievement teacher assesses the overall standard of the PEP, recording this on the e-PEP system. Feedback is sent to the child or young person's designated teacher and social worker.

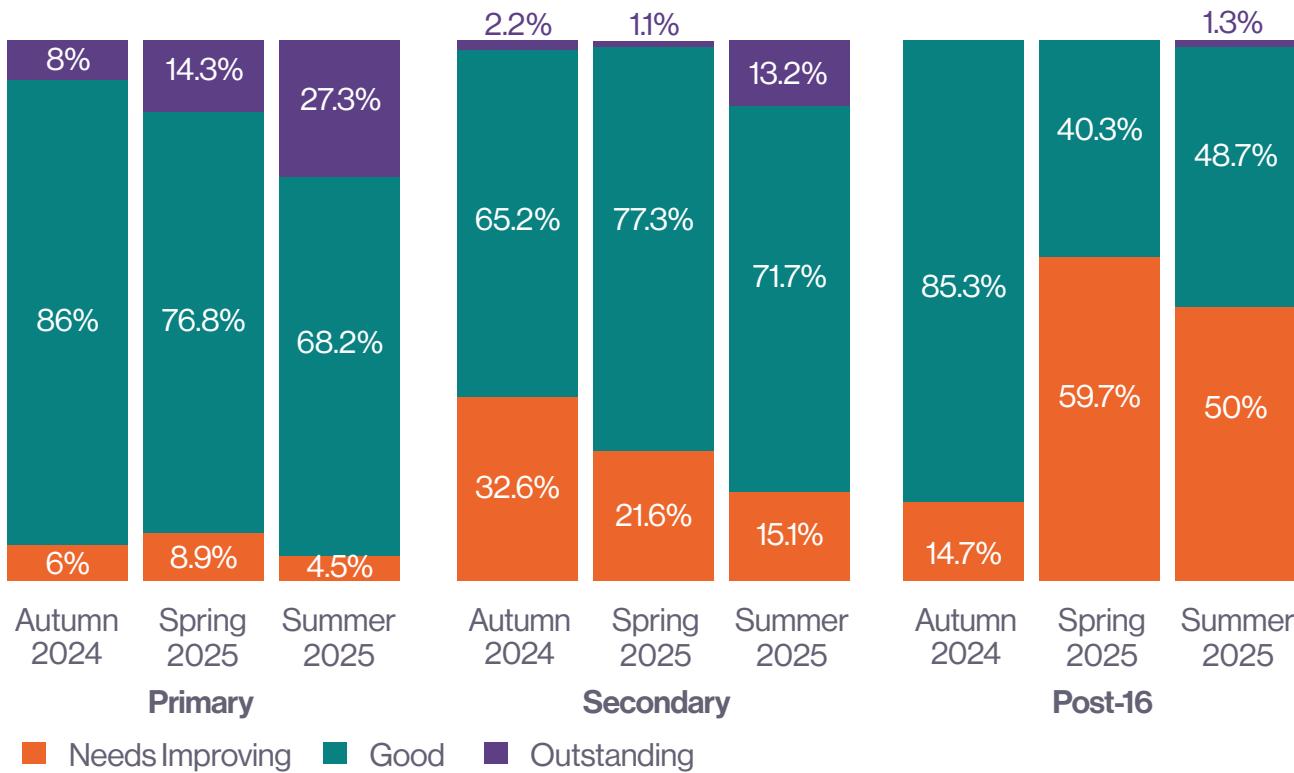


6.9 The quality of the PEP is the joint responsibility of the local authority that looks after the child or young person, and the school. We work closely with social workers, carers, designated teachers and, as appropriate, other relevant professionals to complete PEPs. Within the Westmorland & Furness Virtual School, we aim for PEPs to be aspirational and inspirational, reflecting the academic needs of the child or young person alongside their hobbies, interests, aptitudes and any SEMH needs.

6.10 Trends for this academic year are positive. Across the Virtual School, there has been a 9% increase in PEPs graded 'outstanding' from the spring term (4%) to the summer term (13%). There has been a corresponding decrease of 9% for those PEPs graded 'Needs Improving' from the spring term (32%) to the summer term (23%). As you will see from our children's achievements this has translated into impact in terms of their outcomes and attendance.

6.11 When broken down into phases, it is evident that there has been a similar rate of improvement (12-14%) of PEP standards across EYFS, primary and secondary PEPs over the last two terms, while post-16 PEPs remain a key area of focus and development.

PEP quality by phase and term



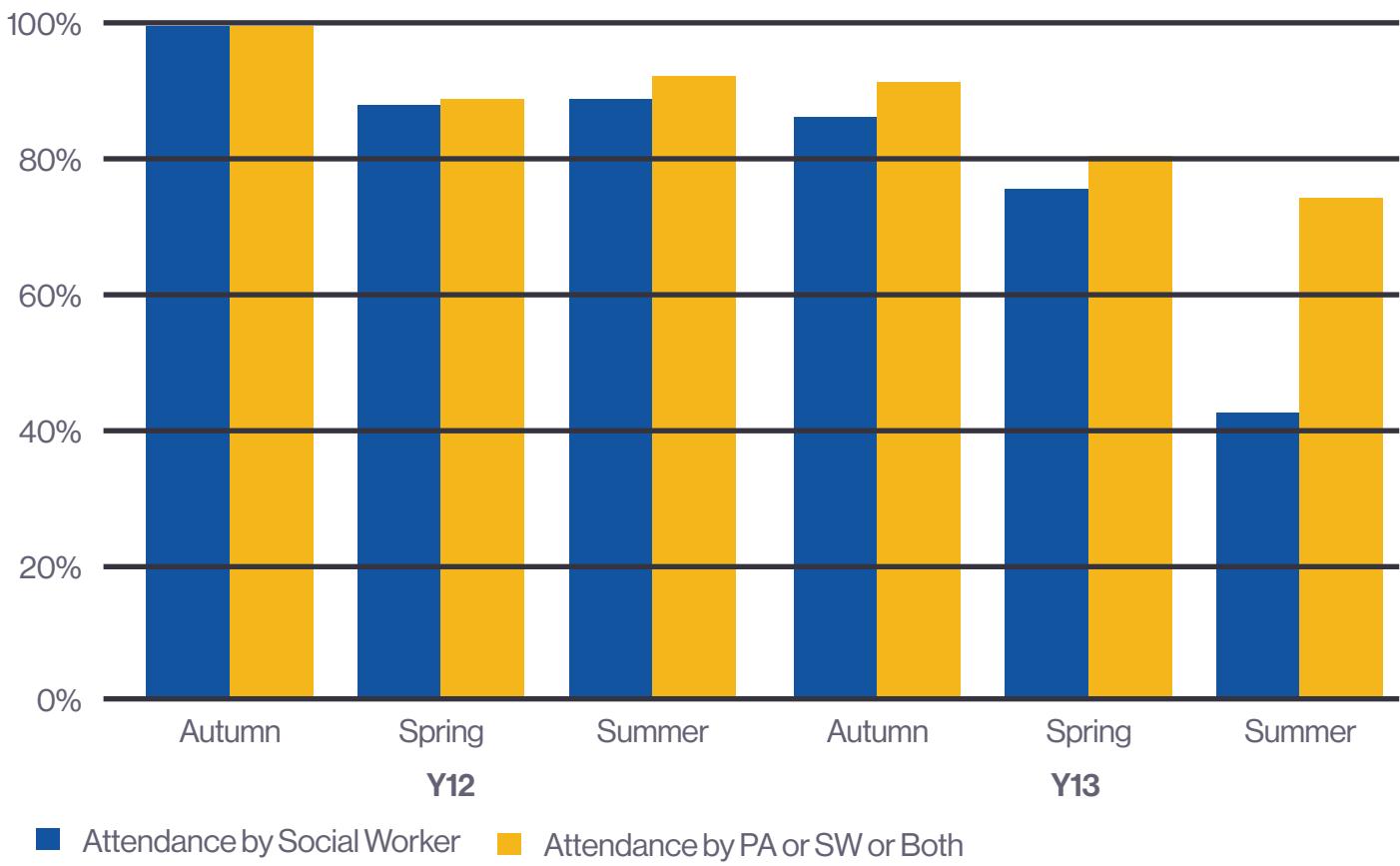
PEP Quality Assurance Panel

6.12 This term saw the inaugural meeting of the new PEP Quality Assurance Panel on 12 June 2025. The Panel reviewed ten PEPs and agreed with the grade judgement for eight of those. This process has supported our achievement teachers to more consistently and accurately grade PEPs.

Attendance at PEP Meetings

6.14 PEP meetings are held by the Designated Teacher for Cared for Children at each educational setting. Attendance at PEPs is statutory for social workers. This academic year, there has been a drop in the attendance of social workers in PEPs for young people in Year 12 compared to those in Year 13. We are working closely with social care colleagues to ensure that support is there for young people throughout their Year 13 academic year, even after their 18th birthday.

Social care attendance at PEPs by term



7. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

7.1 Introduction and Overview:

Within the Virtual School Team we have two SEND Lead members of staff who work closely with SEND Team Managers and EHCP coordinators to support our children who present with complex needs. SEND Leads communicate regularly with social care, SEND and Commissioning to support children to achieve the best possible outcomes. The Virtual School is also represented on SEND panels supporting our children through EHCP referrals and legal processes. Our SEND leads will also be proactive in working alongside school colleagues to create bespoke plans to support children in school with complex needs, which lead with a trauma informed approach. They also support schools to work proactively with SEN Support children.

7.2 Celebrations

- We have developed strong co-working between the SEND Team and Virtual School over the past 12 months resulting in a much-improved offer for our Cared for Children. The collaborative approach to securing resource and provision for some of our children with the most complex needs is something to be celebrated and built on moving forward.
- We have ensured that some of our most complex Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) SEND children have secured places in local authority schools both in and out of county.
- Where there is a clearly identified need, we have requested assessments and supported children, families and schools to gain EHCPs for children both in and out of area. We are proud to have supported our children, with all EHCP applications being agreed, completed, and issued within the statutory 20-week timescale.

7.3 Developments for academic year 2024/25

- We have developed the Virtual School's SEND data as a part of the new Virtual School Dashboard, a huge support in our ability to monitor and identify trends. The SEND tracking system allows us to look in greater depth at our children moving from SEN Support to EHCPs, with additional oversight for those children transitioning through the Key Stages.
- We have supported as best we can the timely access to Independent Specialist Provisions (ISPs) for our children.

7.4 Developments for academic year 2025/26

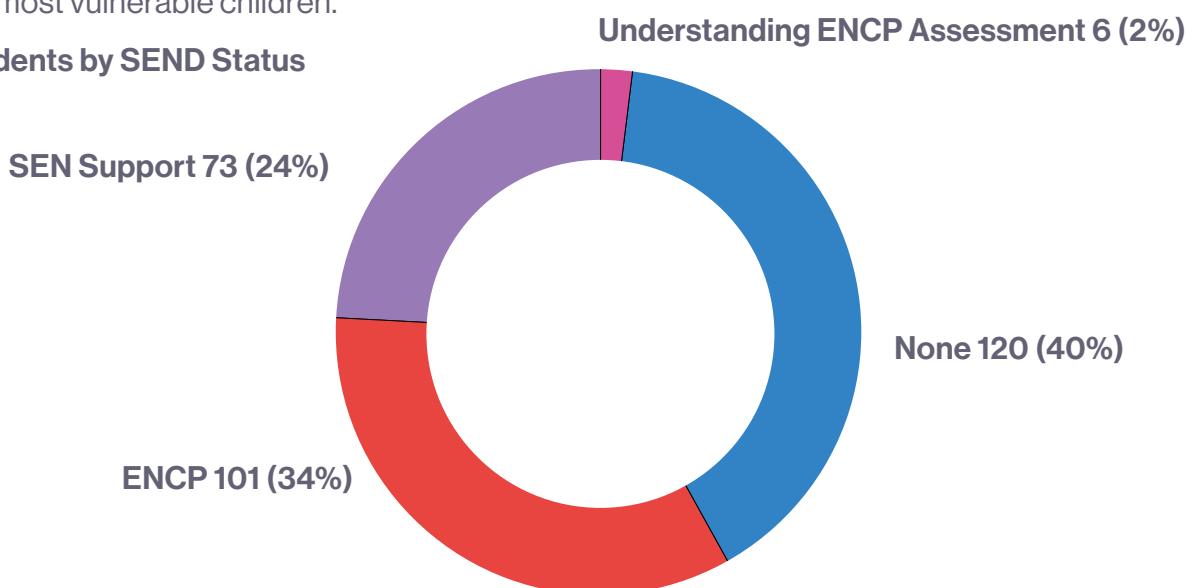
- We will improve the quality of EHCP and PEP target setting for our children with SEMH needs, continuing to work with some of our specialist provisions offering training and support where needed.
- We will work with colleagues across services and from within the Virtual School to improve attendance of our SEND children, particularly at Key Stage 4.
- We will explore the benefits and uses of WellComm as a tool for screening speech and language needs within our Early Years and Primary cohort.
- We will keep abreast of the offer in terms of provision in county, this includes newly opening Resourced and Alternative Provisions.

7.5 The Data

Our children with EHCPs

7.6 We have 101 children with an EHCP including our Post-16 cohort, 73 children with SEN Support and 6 undergoing an EHCP assessment. More than a third of our Virtual School cohort currently hold an EHCP, reinforcing the need for ongoing and close work with the SEND service to support our most vulnerable children.

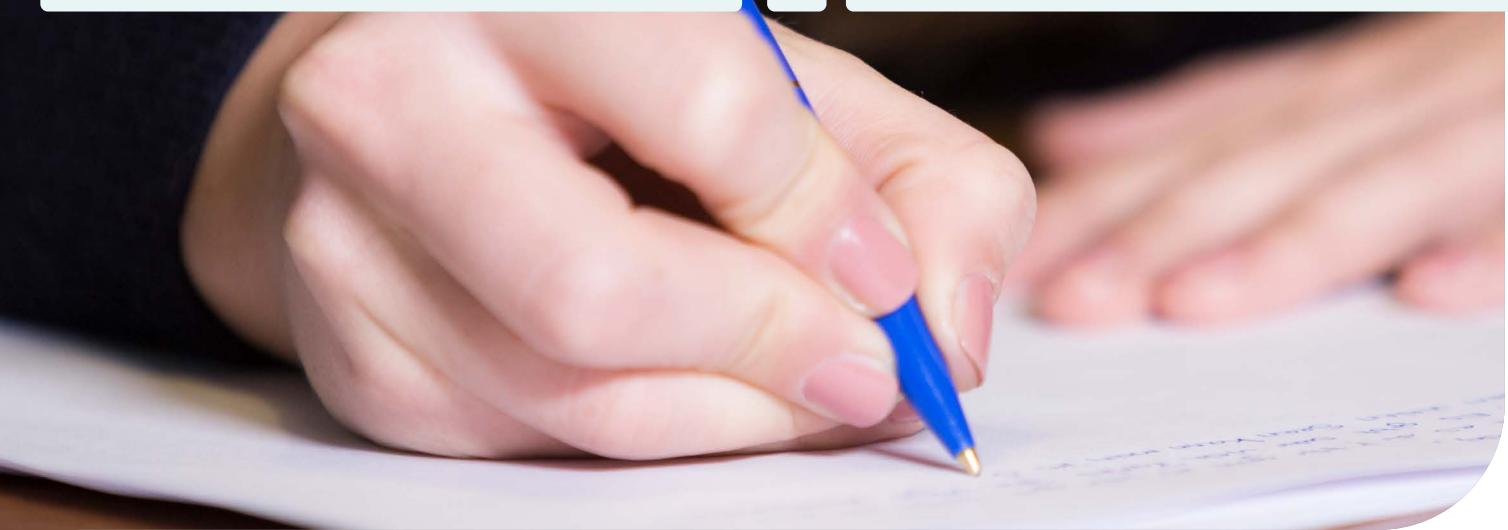
Students by SEND Status



7.7 Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) is the primary area of need for 65% of our EHCP children. We need to collaborate closely with our schools to ensure these children and young people have an effective SEMH target within their PEPs and EHCPs. We will also consider the correlation between SEMH and other needs, specifically speech and language, as a barrier in the classroom. We aim to focus on language and communication through from EYFS, working with our Early Years team more closely, and developing tools to assess speech, language and communication.

7.8 We currently have four children with EHCPs who are educated other than at school (EOTAS) who are provided bespoke educational packages in line with SEND EOTAS practice. We have three children out of provision accessing packages of tuition and support whilst actively seeking a school placement.



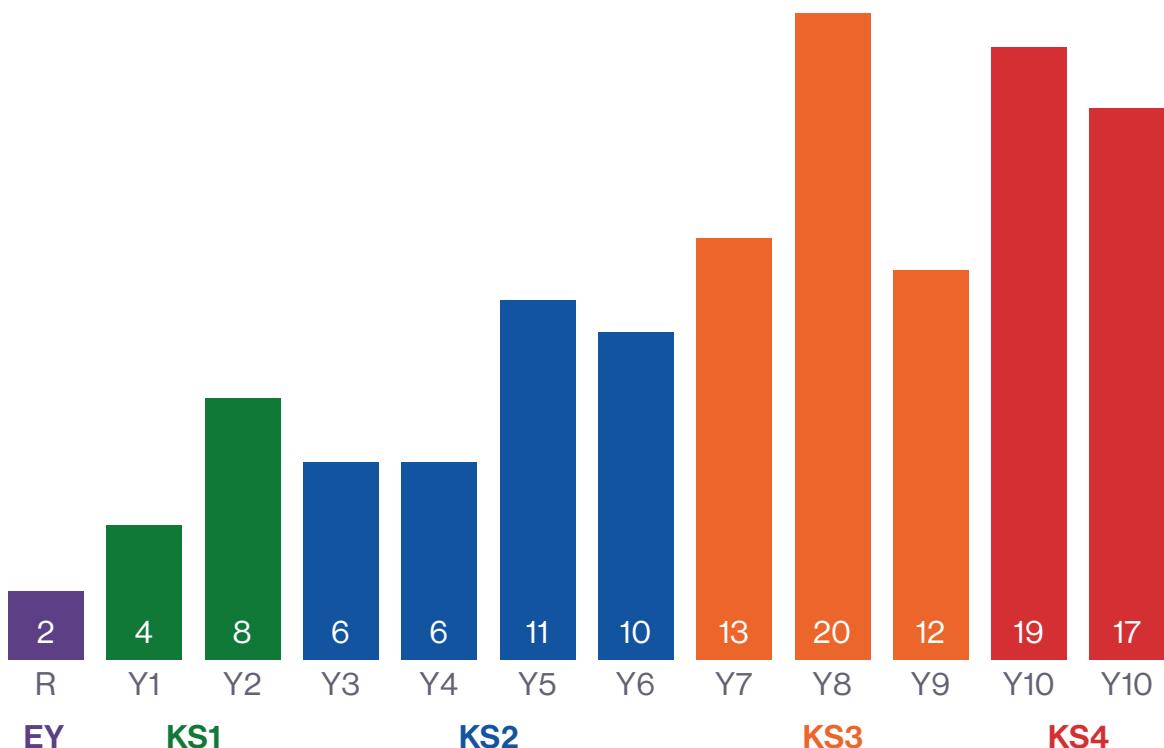


SEN SUPPORT and EHCP by Year Group

7.9 We have a significant number of children holding EHCP plans in Post 16 and have a high number on SEN Support through Years 11 and 12. These young people need significant support through their transition to Post-16 and beyond to avoid them becoming Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) hence the vision for a Virtual College where we will clarify and map out the different Education, Employment and Training (EET) Pathways available to our Post 16 young people and the support available from the Virtual College team.

7.10 The data below shows a higher number of SEN Support and EHCPs in our 2024/25 Key Stage 3 cohort. We have therefore put additional support and focus into these young people through their Summer term 2025 PEPs to ensure a positive transition into the next academic year. The number of children in Year 5 with an EHCP is also high – we will be monitoring and supporting these children as they transition into Year 6 and beyond for 2025/26.

Pupil NCY and Key Stage



This academic year D has been a high priority in terms of support from the Virtual School since coming into care in April 2024, when he moved out of area to a children's home in The Wirral. DH holds an EHCP and has ASD as his primary area of need, he also has a diagnosis of ADHD, Moderate Learning Difficulties, and sensory needs.

While we waited for the right school place for D the Virtual School worked closely with his care placement and social worker to build an educational timetable to create structure and boundaries. Valuable information sharing meant key relationships were established quickly with D and he began to feel safe and settled in his new home.

The process to gain a school place for D took many months and, in this time, a significant life event set D back with the death of a parent, all professionals worked together to support D through this incredibly sad time.

Following some significant hurdles to securing a permanent school place a school was identified at a Local Authority provision, an Outstanding school, but over-subscribed. The Virtual School therefore requested direction, and this was approved by Wirral SEND.

During this lengthy process we also instigated an annual review of D's EHCP, completed his PEPs recording actions, put forward consideration of an independent provider linked to Keys Education, and agreed tutoring from one of the specialist providers to support engagement; with D being out of education for an extended period. We initiated the assessment and production of specialist reports (SALT and OT) to support the matching process and understanding of need.

To our delight his new school quickly stepped in to help build a robust transition plan. We then saw D engage in a school setting after 8 months of waiting, to see him exploring spaces and engaging once again in education was wonderful. After a significant period without a school place D is now attending school and most importantly, he is happy and has a clear sense of belonging to his new school.



8. Post-16

8.1 Introduction and Overview:

Two members of the team work with social care colleagues and education providers to coordinate support for our young people in Years 12 and 13.

8.2 Celebrations

- We have successfully recruited to the Post-16 Positive Engagement Officer who is due to start September 2025 to support in our drive to increase our young people accessing Education, Employment and Training (EET).
- We have continued to strengthen our partnership working with colleges and social care colleagues.
- We have enhanced our training offer for Further Education settings.
- We have extended our Post-16 PEP support beyond the statutory age of 18 so that we cover all of Year 13. This has recently been recognised as excellent practice at a Regional Post-16 event.

8.3 Developments for academic year 2024/25

- We have increased our Post-16 PEP completion rate to 94% from 83% in 2023/24.
- We have improved the quality of our PEPs.
- We have increased our attendance at PEP meetings.
- We have increased our visits to Further Education providers/colleges, for both PEP support and training, across Westmorland & Furness, Cumberland and North Lancashire.

8.4 Developments for academic year 2025/26

- We will develop our Virtual College model.
- We will continue to build and strengthen relationships with colleges.
- We will develop a Barrow-focused Designated Teacher Network across primary, secondary and further education.
- We will have a regular presence at the Care Leaver Hub in Barrow to develop relationships with young people and those who work directly with them.
- We will ensure that there is social care representation to all Year 13 PEPs.

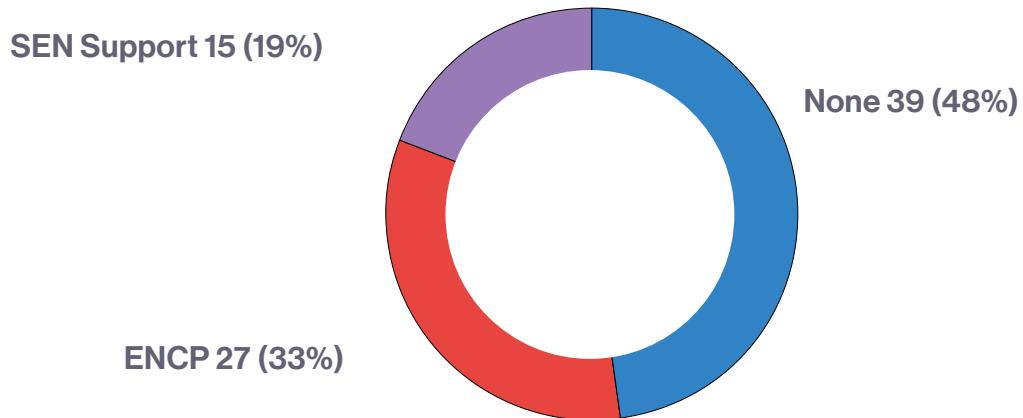


8.5 The Data

An overview of our Post 16 young people:

8.6 The majority (70%) of our post-16 cohort are male. This is largely due to the UASC cohort which are all male. The percentage of non-UASC post-16s who are male is 57%.

Students by SEND Status



8.7 More than half of our post-16 students have some form of SEND, the lowest proportion outside of our pre-school children. Two-thirds of our post-16s with an EHCP have a Social, Emotional and Mental Health primary need.

Education, Employment and Training (EET)

8.7 In the Summer term 2025, 69% of our Year 12 and 13 cohort were in education, employment or training. This is an increase of 7% compared to the previous summer. In the coming academic year we will be working closely with INSPIRA on an additional re-engagement provision which we have committed to for our NEET young people which I will be able to report on in my next report.

Cohort	Summer term 2023	Summer term 2024	Summer term 2025
EET	63%	62%	69%
NEET	37%	38%	31%

With the Virtual School's support and guidance W enrolled on a bespoke learning programme at Myerscough College, Preston in September 2024. W has a significant visual impairment, making his career choice in the farming industry not without its challenges. Through the creation and implementation of a holistic support plan by the Virtual School, SEND, Social Care and his home teams, William has managed to complete his farming qualification. William's hard work, passion and ability to overcome obstacles, has now secured him a fantastic opportunity on a bespoke apprenticeship with Mike Duxbury from the Blind Farmer TV Series.

W supporting lambing in Spring 2025



9. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children (UASC)

9.1 Introduction and Overview

In Westmorland & Furness we also refer to this cohort as Separated Children. We work closely with social care, schools and post-16 education providers to support them to achieve the best possible outcomes.

9.2 Celebrations:

- We have a growing understanding of the interplay between SEND and English as an Additional Language (EAL).
- We have reintroduced the Separated Children Focus Group for Westmorland and Furness.
- We have extended our Separated Children PEP support beyond the statutory age of 18.
- We have maintained a high PEP completion rate for our Separated Children, with 100% completion being typical.

9.3 Developments for academic year 2024/25:

- We have supported our Year 11 arrivals who struggle to be placed in mainstream classes, especially when they arrive in the Spring or Summer terms.
- We have started to build communication links so that colleges are able to meet demand for ESOL courses.
- We have improved our support for the Separated Children who are NEET.

9.4 Developments for academic year 2025/26

- We will develop our Virtual College offer to include our Separated Children.
- We will develop a Separated Children Strategy which intends to develop a consistent approach and signposting for professionals to accessing support, systems and processes for our Separated Children.

9.5 The Data

Our Separated Children

9.6 At the end of July 2025, there were 28 Separated Children in the Virtual School. All our Separated Children are boys from Year 11 up to Year 13. Ten have become Cared For this academic year.



9.7 Our Separated Children come to us from all over the world. The current cohort came to us from Vietnam, Iran, Sudan, Afghanistan, Morocco, Egypt, Ethiopia, Somalia, Liberia and Eritrea. Their first languages are just as varied, with our young people speaking Vietnamese, Kurdish Sorani, Arabic (also Sudanese Arabic), Pashto, Dari, Farsi, Oromo, Somali and Tigrinya.



9.8 Our Separated Children are currently living in Cumberland, Lancashire, Oldham, Tameside, Blackburn and Darwen, Liverpool, the London Borough of Brent and Stoke-on-Trent.

Separated Children with SEND

9.9 The number of Separated Children with SEND has increased this academic year. This is partly due to an increased understanding of the relationship between language barriers and SEND amongst Separated Children. We have worked closely with Educational Psychologists and Speech and Language Therapists to provide comprehensive assessments to support these young people's educational progress.



S came to the UK from Sudan in June 2024 knowing very little English. While waiting for his age assessment to be completed, the Virtual School provided Flash Academy however following a placement move to his current carer, he sadly struggled to access this online language development tool. The Virtual School sourced an in-person tutor so that S accessed 1-hour lessons throughout the week. The feedback from the tutor was always positive:

'A most satisfying student to teach! S has been having ESOL lessons for more than three months, and everything has gone well. He really is making great progress! He seems to have no difficulty in mastering a lot of new material weekly and in incorporating this into the language he already knows. Some of the texts we read or listen to narrate complex stories, but it is clear that he understands them. He always does his homework and takes some pride in this.'

Securing a place in mainstream secondary school in northwest London was proving very challenging. S took this all in his stride, working hard with his tutor in the meantime although he really wanted to be in school making friends. Through our professional network we were able to link directly with the Executive Headteacher of S's chosen over subscribed Ark Elvin Academy.

Since starting this school in February 2025, he has glowing reports from teachers and is working hard towards his GCSEs.

'He works really hard in the lesson. He starts working right away and shows great integrity, remaining focused throughout. He always completes his homework to 100%.



**ARK Elvin
Academy**



10. Children with a Social Worker (CWSW)

10.1 Introduction and Overview

From September 2021 the remit of the Virtual School extended to cover giving support, advice and guidance to schools, parents and other professionals in relation to the education of Children with a Social Worker as well as those who are on Child Protection or Children in Need Plans. From September 2024 the cohort also included those who are living with Kinship Carers or under a Special Guardianship Order. The role of the Virtual School with this cohort is not the same as with our Cared for Children as it is a more strategic approach and not purely working with individual children. We have identified areas of our local authority where numbers of children with a Social Worker are higher and have provided additional support and training to our schools in these areas with further plans for the next academic year.

10.2 Celebrations

- We have offered the BUSS model across this whole cohort with no child not making progress against the BUSS assessments when they have taken part in this intervention.
- We have delivered training at the Social Worker's Development Morning.
- We have supported The Resilience Project to run again in the Autumn term 2024, offering the project to one school in Barrow and one in Penrith. The project, delivered by Family Action, works with young people who are at risk of non-attendance or who are disengaged from learning.
- We have supported social workers and schools with education-based queries, with signposting being given to the Adoption Support Fund, and Special Guardianship Orders Support Fund, as well as support with navigating the SEND process.

10.3 Development Focus for academic year 2024/25

- We have developed relationships and networks with the professionals supporting CWSW.
- We have improved our access to education data for our CWSW to enable strategic planning for the cohort.

10.4 Development Focus for academic year 2025/26

- We will ensure early identification of falling attendance and increase the number of young people with attendance above 95% and therefore impact positively on their lifelong outcomes.
- We will develop and support increased awareness in schools of the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) on a child's ability to learn and attain.
- We will embed education within Child in Need and Child Protection plans, widening the scope of the discussion to cover attainment as well as attendance.
- We will develop a rolling programme of development with social workers.
- We will support early years provision to enable children to be school ready, through provision such as BUSS.

10.5 The Data

Attainment

10.6 Key Stage 2 results are a real strength area for our CiN cohort where we saw some fantastic attainment increases in 2024/25. Performance was higher than national for Reading, Writing TA, Mathematics and RWM (Combined), with increases of 14%, 18%, 5% and 16% over the previous year respectively.

Attendance

Attendance	W&F CIN (2024/25)	National CIN (2023/24)	W&F CPP (2024/25)	National CPP (2023/24)
Attendance	82%	83%	78%	80%
Overall Absence	18%	17%	22%	20%
Persistent Absence	35%	44%	49%	53%

10.7 Positively persistent absence has decreased for both CiN and CP cohorts this academic year and is below the latest published national average.

Other

10.8 The key finding from an audit of CIN and CP Plans shows that an education setting was only named for 55% of children. Attendance data was only reported in 30% of plans. We are working with social care to increase awareness of the importance of access to education to safeguard these children and improve their long-term outcomes.

11. Building Underdeveloped Sensorimotor Systems (BUSS)

11.1 Introduction and Overview

Westmorland and Furness Virtual School are supporting and developing 'BUSS in Education' as a programme to support school readiness. BUSS is a targeted and pro-active intervention to help some of our children challenged by under-developed sensorimotor systems who may have experienced early developmental disruption.

Any disruption to a child's early development, for whatever reason (e.g. prematurity, hospital admissions, lifestyle, neglect or trauma) will impact on the development of their bodily regulation and can make life at school very difficult for them.

For these children, it can be helpful to look at the pre-requisite skills of school readiness through the lens of foundation sensorimotor systems, understanding the role that bodily regulation plays in emotional regulation and learning. Building good bodily regulation gives a child a platform for the development of more complex skills, like understanding and managing feelings, making and keeping friends, and learning.

The BUSS Model empowers parents and carers with a toolbox of practical and fun-based sensory rebuilding activities that they can incorporate into their everyday life.

With the financial support of the Children With a Social Worker Grant, BUSS continues to grow across Westmorland and Furness and is now recognised by professionals as a key intervention that can increase a child's capacity to manage the demands of school and daily life. BUSS groups take children from across Westmorland and Furness and are based in Barrow, Kendal and Penrith.

11.2 Celebrations

- We have increased the number of children who have accessed BUSS to over 200 from across our local authority schools.
- We have many children who are making significant progress in the areas targeted by BUSS, which then positively impacts on their life, not least their education.
- Feedback from parents and carers has been very positive for example “We cannot thank X enough for the support and care they have shown which has meant that our children can now go to school, be successful, learn and our family is now settled and happy”.
- We now have a qualified BUSS practitioner within the Virtual School team.

11.3 Developments for academic year 2024/25

- We have increased our BUSS provision to include the Eden area.
- We have developed our system for recording data from the groups.
- We have developed a triage system which identifies children who would benefit from either 1:1 support or group work.

11.4 Developments for academic year 2025/26

- We will increase capacity in our BUSS team.
- We will increase our collaboration with our Family Hub and Early Help teams.

11.5 The Data

Introductory webinars have been attended by 104 professionals this year, bringing the total number to 509 since 2021. An additional 14 people have attended Level 1 training which enables them to lead groups under our supervision. Over the academic year we have run 15 groups in six different settings. The groups have enabled over 200 children to access BUSS.

Our children are making progress across all BUSS measures, improving their ability to access formal education. It is rare that a child is not able to access a BUSS group due to additional challenges but when this occurs, we then provide 1:1 support. We have therefore only needed to provide 14 children with one-to-one BUSS intervention support since 2021. However, we are looking at ways to increase staffing capacity to enable us to reach more children on a 1:1 basis.



L is a 6-year-old cared for child who was struggling at school. Our BUSS Lead worked with the family for around 4 months, carrying out a BUSS® assessment to identify the gaps in L's development and then putting together a plan of activities for the carer to do with L to fill these gaps.

By the end of the BUSS intervention the carer reported how she had noticed a real shift in L physically. L will now play on apparatus in the park which he would previously have avoided and has started playing football with the children at school. They also noticed a big change in L's ability to manage touch. Previously he didn't enjoy hugs and could not tolerate the feel of sand at the beach. By the end of the BUSS intervention, he loves going to the beach, walking barefoot, rolling down the sand dunes and being buried in the sand.

Once more we can say that BUSS Intervention work can be life changing for our children and their families.

I have made friends and get invited to parties

I have caught up what I have missed in my learning

I am more settled in class and can sit still

I can sit all the way through assembly now



12. School Attendance and Inclusion Report

12.1 Introduction & Overview

We recognise how important attendance is to our children's educational and social development. This year, our full cohort of children reached an 89% attendance rate - matching both last year's figure and the latest national average for children in care. For those of our children in care for 12 months or more on 31 March 2025, attendance was 91%. Our overall persistent absence rate continues to be of concern, remaining at 32%, 6% higher than the latest national figure. A further breakdown of attendance can be found in section 12.5.

For those children struggling with attendance, our Virtual School Inclusion Officers and Achievement Teachers work with schools, social workers and carers to provide support. We use PEPs and Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings to put plans in place, and we use Pupil Premium Plus to put in place mentoring, tuition and alternative provision where appropriate.

Unfortunately, this year saw the Virtual School's first permanent exclusion however we have worked hard to ensure that this child had an appropriate next educational provision which they are now successfully attending. We saw an increase in the number of children suspended this year (22 compared to 20 the previous year), reflecting a national picture of rising suspensions. Most of our suspensions (82%) were for children at secondary school.

12.2 Celebrations

- We have improved attendance at primary schools to 95%
- We have reduced the rate of persistent absentees in primary school by 4%

12.3 Developments for academic year 2024/25

- We have continued to develop positive relationships with social care colleagues to establish processes and systems to inform the Virtual School when a child may be moving so that we can proactively support the plan.
- We have worked with the Adoption Team Senior Managers to review and update current systems so that we do not have more than two weeks absence from school when they move to their adoptive families.
- We have provided additional funding to support preventative strategies for those at risk of exclusion which has meant we have avoided at least four Permanent Exclusions.
- We have initiated multi-agency meetings for young people who are experiencing attendance or exclusion challenges to identify any barriers and put support plans in place which has meant that attendance improved in all cases.

12.4 Developments for academic year 2025/26

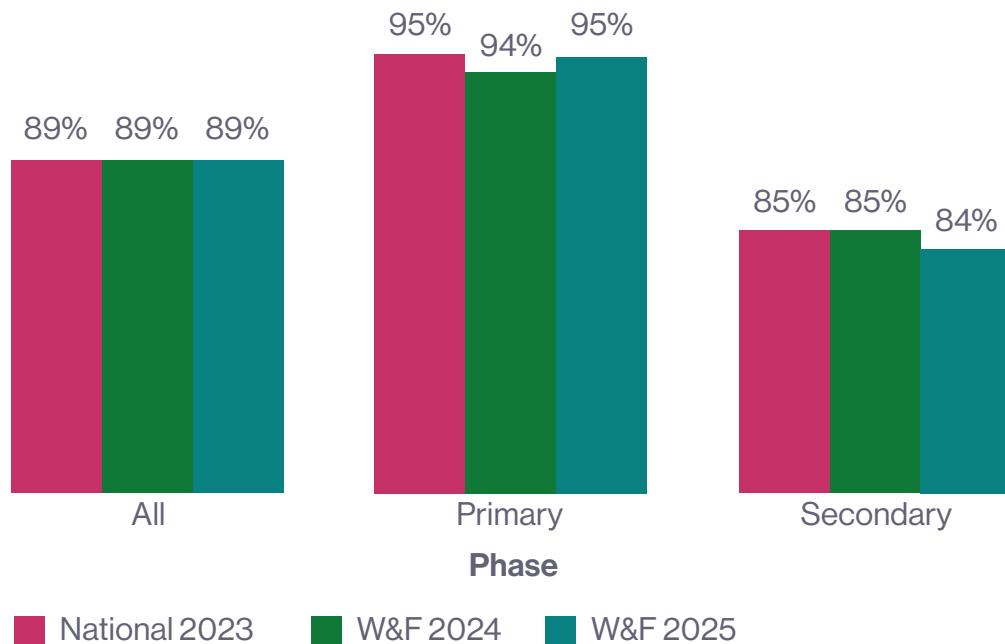
- We will aim to have an overall Virtual School pupil attendance of 92% by the end of the coming academic year.
- We will implement attendance intervention meetings for children whose attendance is less than 95%.
- We will be involved during care planning for our children who are moving placement.
- We will include attendance targets and corresponding actions in PEPs for children who are persistently absent and hold schools and social care colleagues to account to implement them.
- We will work closely with settings to develop a trauma-informed approach to suspensions and exclusions.

- We will work with our designated teachers in schools to include school attendance leads in PEP meetings where appropriate.
- We will employ two Positive Engagement Officers who will support attendance improvement for our children.

12.5 The Data

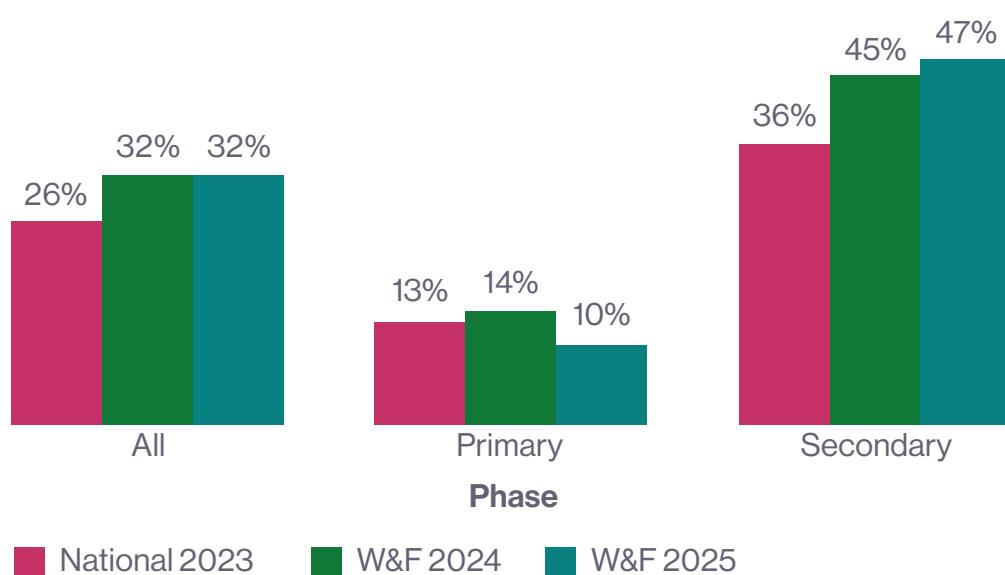
A full breakdown of attendance and inclusion data can be found in Appendix 2. Unless otherwise stated, figures are for the whole Virtual School cohort, including those in care for less than 12 months.

Attendance Rate

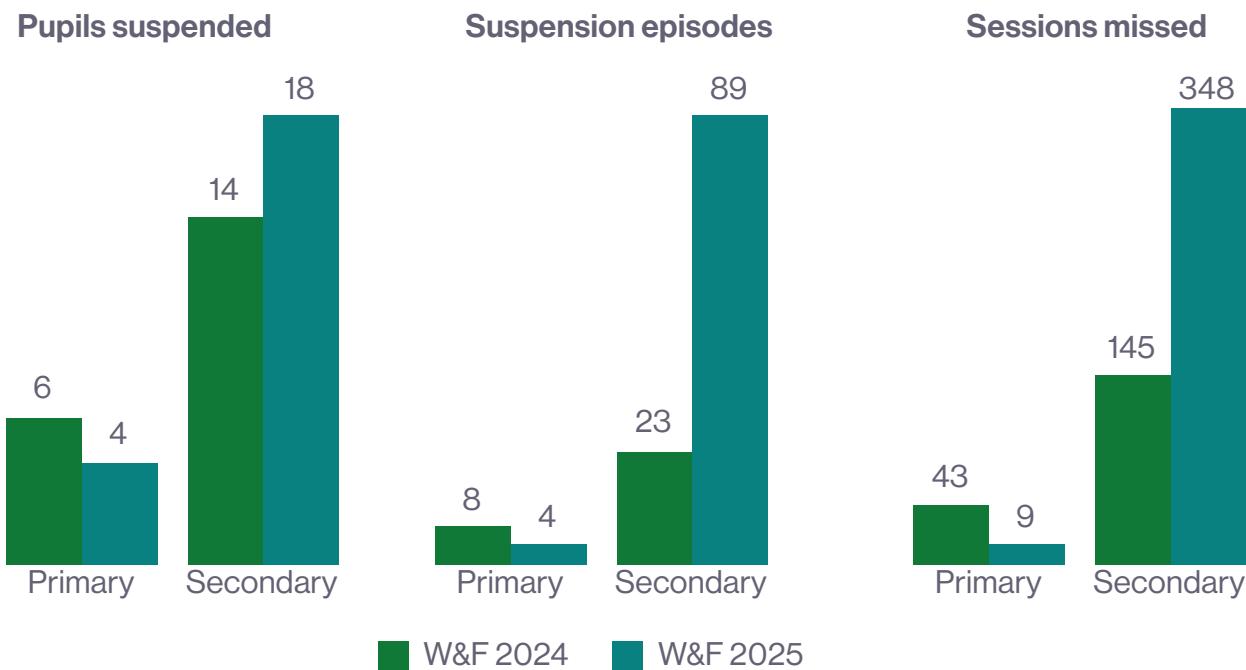


12.6 Our attendance rate has remained consistent over the past year, with our primary school attendance particularly positive. Attendance at mainstream settings was higher than those at special schools, particularly at secondary phase, with 86% attendance at mainstream settings compared to 74% for pupils at maintained special schools. Attendance for our CLA 12 month+ primary cohort was 97%, while our secondary attendance for CLA 12 month+ was 87%.

Persistent Absence Rate



12.7 Our persistent absence rate remains an area for development, particularly for our children at secondary school. However, there is a clear difference between the rate of persistent absence for those who have been looked after for more than 12 months and those newer to care. Our secondary-aged pupils who were CLA 12 month+ at 31 March 2025 had a persistent absence rate of 41% compared to 68% for those newer to care. This is also reflected at primary phase, with just 2% persistent absence for those in the 12 month+ cohort compared to 20% to those in care for less than a year. Persistent absence is also higher amongst our maintained special school cohort (40%) compared to our mainstream school pupils (31%). We will be looking into opportunities for multi-agency working to explore the challenges and implement solutions to ensure we see an improvement in attendance in the new academic year.



12.8 We are seeing an increase in the number of suspensions, reflecting the national picture. Of the 22 pupils suspended this year, nine had been in care for more than 12 months as at 31 March 2025. However, they account for 50 of the 93 suspension episodes.

Primary Phase

12.9 Our primary children attended 95% of their sessions 2024/25, a slight increase over the 94% last year. The persistent absence rate (children with less than 90% attendance) was just under 10% this year; this is not only lower than the most recent national average of 13%, but it is also a decrease of more than 4% over last year's rate of 14%.

12.10 Suspensions at primary schools are much less common than at secondary schools. Nevertheless, four of our primary pupils (one in year 3 and three in year 5) were given a suspension at some point during the academic year. It is worth noting that those suspensions were short, with 9 sessions missed altogether (an average of just over a single day, compared to an average of around 21 sessions missed for secondary-aged pupils). There were no exclusions for primary aged children.

Secondary Phase

12.11 Our secondary aged children achieved an attendance rate of 84% this academic year, a slight decrease from the 85% in 2023/24 and below the latest published national figure. Whilst a drop in attendance for secondary aged pupils is seen nationally across all cohorts, it is clear that a continued focus on raising attendance levels of secondary aged students, particularly for our Year 10 and 11 students is a key priority for the Virtual School.

12.12 Nationally suspensions are on the rise, and our Virtual School is no different. This year 18 secondary-aged pupils were suspended, with one going on to be permanently excluded. This is an increase of four pupils suspended over the previous academic year. The number of suspension episodes has also increased, although the average length of those suspensions has reduced from just over six sessions per suspension to just under four sessions per suspension. When a child is suspended, we do challenge and ensure that we are a part of the reintegration meetings to ensure that the school is supporting differently and better moving forwards.

Alternative Provision and Part-Time Timetables

12.13 The number of children accessing alternative provision is relatively low in the Westmorland and Furness Virtual School. One primary-aged child and 14 secondary-aged pupils accessed some form of alternative provision this year, in line with the previous year. Nine secondary-aged children were on a reduced timetable this year, up slightly from four the previous year.

13. Care Experienced and Kinship Care

13.1 The remit of Virtual Schools for Previously Looked After Children (PLAC), also known as Care Experienced young people, is to provide strategic educational support and advocacy for children who were previously in the care system but have since left through adoption, special guardianship orders (SGO) and child arrangements orders.

13.2 Care Experienced children often continue to face educational challenges even after they leave formal care, and the Virtual School's role is to ensure they receive the right support to thrive academically and emotionally.

13.3 Children who were previously looked after are entitled to Pupil Premium Plus, at the same level as Cared for Children. Unlike cared for children's Pupil Premium Plus, this resource is transferred directly to the school setting rather than managed by Virtual School. However, this financial resource is provided to schools to help close the educational attainment gap.

Kinship Care

13.4 While Virtual Schools were originally created to focus on children in formal foster care and residential care, the growing recognition of children's educational challenges in kinship care has led to their inclusion in Virtual School's remit from September 2024. Kinship care involves children being cared for by relatives or close family friends when their parents are unable to do so. This can include grandparents, aunts, uncles, or other relatives. These children may face similar challenges to those in other forms of care, such as, barriers to academic success, including instability at home and in school, emotional trauma, and disrupted schooling. Virtual Schools aim to close this gap by providing focused support, ensuring these children are not left behind in their education.

13.5 As of August 2025, we have 48 Cared for Children living in kinship care arrangements.

13.6 We have worked closely this year with the council's Kinship Care Team and developed positive working relationships with the manager to look at and share activities we offer as a local authority with our carers which ensures they feel they are supported.

13.7 This year we joined the Kinship Organisation National Network. Through this we have shared with relevant families training and networking opportunities that are all free to attend on topics such as managing challenging behaviour and keeping children safe online.



14. Pupil Voice

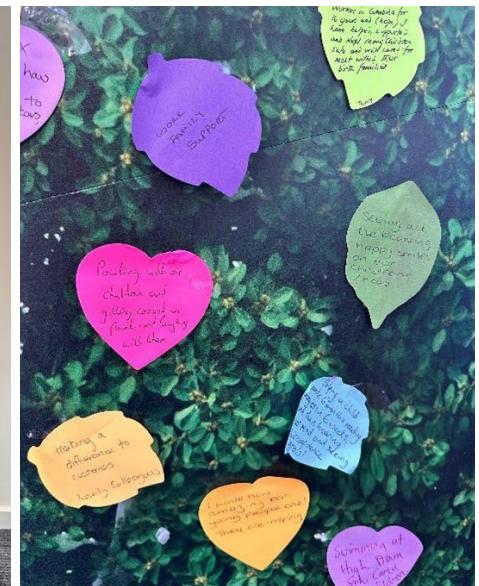
14.1 In the Summer term 2025, 96% of PEPs had the pupil view completed, but a number of young people chose not to attend the PEP (70%) and complete the Pupil Voice element with their Designated Teacher outside and ahead of the PEP meeting. This is an area that we are looking to increase in the coming academic year learning from one of our secondary schools where all the young people attend their PEPs in person. This has worked incredibly well capturing their thoughts, feelings and wishes for the future as well as developing our Virtual School relationships with the young people directly.

As well as our case studies throughout the report please see below for further evidence of our children's views that have been reflected in PEP targets set, such as:

They said...	We did...
I would like to have some additional tutoring for my Maths.	We were able to use the PPG+ to support your request, the impact of this additional support was that you got a GCSE Grade 5 in Maths although original predictions indicted a Grade 3. Well done!
I would like to learn to swim.	We supported with swimming lessons and purchasing swimming aids which meant that you learnt to swim.
I would like to become an electrician.	We purchased a electricians starter kit so you were able to begin your course successfully and alleviate any anxiety.
I would like to develop my gymnastic skills.	We provided funds to enable you to buy equipment and attend competitions with your club which you told us you really enjoyed.
I would like to pursue qualifications in mountain biking.	We offered to purchase a bike to help support these qualifications.

Love Our Children Week – July 2025

14.2 As a part of Love Our Children week the Virtual School hosted an event where we invited professionals working with our children to join us for an informal drop-in session on 5 July. It was an opportunity for people to discover more about the work we do and to add their own leaf to the 'Tree of Love and Laughter' - sharing favourite memories of supporting Cared For and Care Experienced young people that have filled our hearts with love and laughter. We hosted this event in Kendal and now plan to take the Tree of Love an opportunity to share their fond mem



15. Reading focus and strategy for the Virtual School

15.1 Introduction and Overview

This academic year has been one of research and strategic development working towards the creation of a strategic three-year development plan, with the aim to improve reading outcomes for all our children and young people.

The year began with a recognition that reading outcomes data for our Cared For cohort are significantly below national average. As the year has progressed, we have introduced our Virtual School Reading Strategy as part of our vision to improve attainment, develop training and instil a love for reading in our Cared for Children.

15.2 Celebrations

- We have launched Literacy Gold across our schools. Our aim is to support readers achieving below age-related expectations with a structured series of lessons for home and school. We launched this intervention with a teacher training event in the Summer term and will follow up with a further session in the Autumn term 2025.

Literacy Gold

- ✓ A Reading Intervention for KS1, KS2 and KS3
- ✓ Improves reading fluency and comprehension
- ✓ Suitable for all children not reaching age related expectations including those with dyslexia
- ✓ **Free** access to all areas of programme through W&F Virtual School to support progress in Reading
- ✓ Date for diary: 30th June 4-5pm training and further info

[Literacy Gold Programs](#)



The diagram illustrates the Literacy Gold program structure. It features a central circle labeled 'Literacy Gold' surrounded by seven smaller circles, each representing a component: 'Dyslexia Screener', 'Engaging Eyes', 'Reading Unlocked', 'Memory Builder', 'Spelling Tutor', 'Comprehension Superstar', and 'Times Tables Tutor'. The background is divided into an orange top section and a teal bottom section.

- We have made a significant impact on some of our children's reading standard which is show in the data below.
- We have linked with a local comic arts festival, offering free event tickets and flyers to encourage foster family engagement.
- We have linked with Happy Home Learning – an organisation supporting and equipping foster families with key skills and knowledge to develop reading with their children aged 0-7 years.
- We have offered two training sessions to foster carers on 'Engaging Reluctant Readers' with an intention to offer more in the coming academic year.
- We have also purchased resources including Tricky Word Tins (phonics) and Reading Resilience Activity Tins (engaging and supporting reading in the home).
- We have recognised the reading achievements of our children with Amazon vouchers to encourage their love of reading.



One of our children celebrating achievement in reading, alongside this is our foster carer flyer for one of our online training events.

15.3 Developments for academic year 2024/25

- We have sourced a reading scheme/programme to support schools.
- We have promoted reading for pleasure through a range of initiatives.
- We have consolidated our data processes to evidence impact.

15.4 Developments for academic year 2025/26

- We will roll out Literacy Gold as an intervention to schools supporting our Cared for Children through Key Stages 1,2 and 3.
- We will provide training and support sessions through the year.
- We will plan future events for foster care families.
- We will work with Happy Home Learning and the foster carers.
- We will develop an in-house replacement for the Letterbox system.
- We will collaborate with the Learning Improvement Service on the Year of Reading initiative.

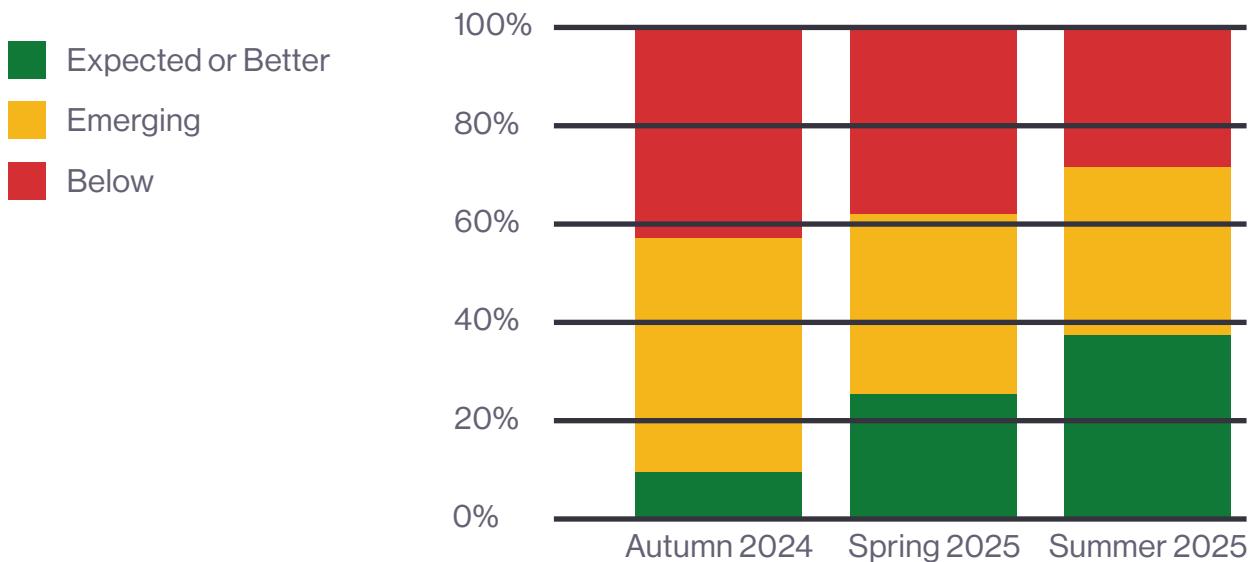
15.5 The Data

Overall reading progress

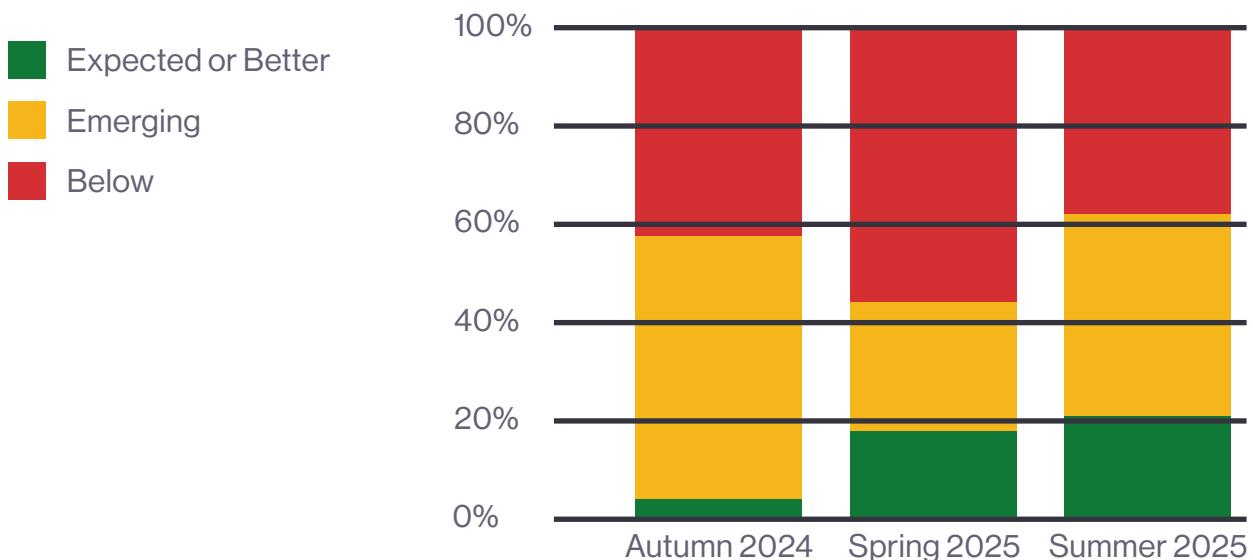
15.6 A new dashboard enables us to review term-by-term progress for our primary school children. The data shows an improving picture this academic year for our primary-aged children.

15.7 At the start of the academic year the children working below age related expectations made up 44% of the cohort, this had significantly reduced to 29% by the Summer term. At the same time 9% were working at expected level or above in the Autumn term; this has increased to 37% in the Summer term. We are really pleased with these outcomes. 42% of our KS2 cohort are at expected standard, compared to a lower 18% in KS1; this will be our area of focus for next year.

Reading level by term SEN Status(es), All Pupils, Gender(s), All Genders



Reading level by term SEN Status(es), EHCP, SEN Support, Gender(s), All Genders



Reading Progress for our SEND Children

15.8 We recognise that there is a need for us to continue to build on our strategic reading support for our children on SEN Support and with an EHCP. The focus will be to ensure speech and language barriers are considered within schools and to encourage schools to use the recently launched Literacy Gold programme as a tool to assess and measure progress in Primary, including our SEND cohort. Alongside this we are looking at WellComm and similar programs specific to language acquisition in the early years.

15.9 Positively data does reflect that there are a number of our children moving from emerging readers to expected reading ability in their term-to-term progress. 4% of children were at the expected level in Reading in the Autumn term, rising to 22% for the Summer term. A figure reflecting a positive trajectory and with an awareness that a proportion within our SEND cohort will be working below age related expectations due to specific learning difficulties.

16. Training in 2024/25

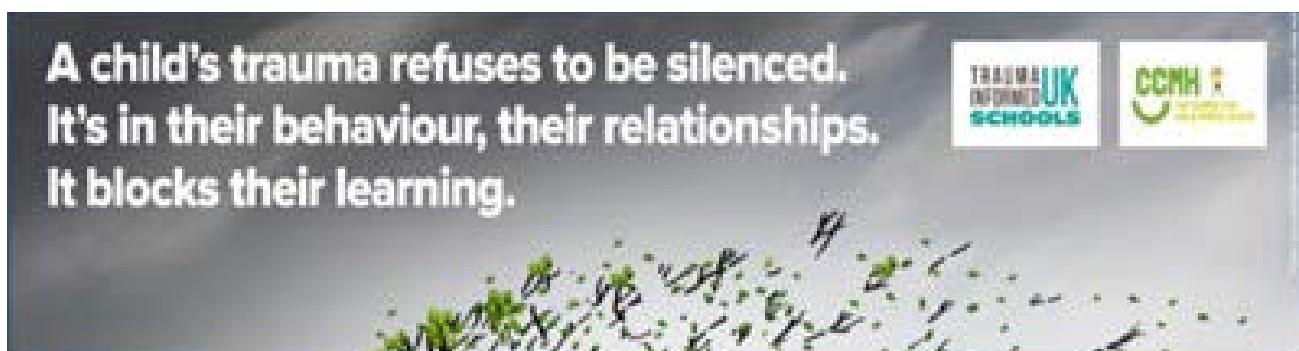
16.1 Introduction and Overview

Our training focus this year has been very much about supporting all those who work with our children to enable better outcomes. We have supported and led training opportunities for Virtual School team members, school leaders and their communities, social workers and colleagues across our LA services.

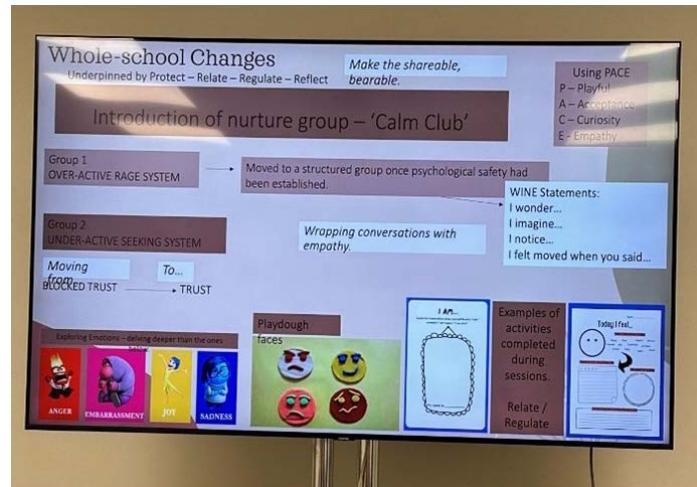
16.2 Celebrations

- We provided twenty funded places on the Trauma Informed Schools UK's Level 5 Diploma in Trauma and Mental Health-Informed Schools and Communities. Feedback from delegates has been positive and we know that the skills they learn while completing this qualification are transformative in terms of the impact on children.

"I just wanted to email you and thank you for putting me forward for the Trauma Informed training. It is honestly the most interesting, inspiring and useful training I think I have ever been on! What I've been saying forever but now I have the evidence behind me and so many tools and practical ways to actually improve things for the children and families".



Julie Harmieson, Director of Education and National Strategy Trauma Informed Schools UK, leading the training for our Diploma Cohort.



One of our fantastic Designated Teachers presenting on her whole school changes following participation in the Trauma Informed Schools Diploma.

- We have established a Trauma-Informed Practice (TIP) Network where discussions and action planning has taken place for the coming academic year.



- We have been able to re-engage many Designated Teachers in the work of the Virtual School through regular webinars.
- We have expanded our virtual training offer in conjunction with Flourish Education, who we commissioned to offer a range of training sessions on topics including supporting children with unmet attachment needs, Emotional Based School Avoidance and supporting previously looked-after children.
- We have continued to provide trauma-informed training in schools.

- We have attended the North-West Virtual School Summer Term Conference (see images below) where we shared good practice across our network.



16.3 Developments for academic year 2025/26

- We will have an established Trauma Informed Network group of professionals.
- We will have a second TIP Diploma Cohort of 28 participants starting in October.
- We will enable Virtual School team members to virtually attend the Oxford Masters Series Conference 2025.
- We will have an in-house Trauma Informed Practice training offer shared across our educational landscape.
- We will support one of our secondary schools to pilot the TISUK PSHE programme. If this pilot is successful, then we would look to roll it out across all of our secondary schools.

TISCUK proudly presents:

What every teenager needs to know about emotions, relationships and mental health.

A PSHE film performed by teenagers for teenagers with accompanying resources to support delivery

We must ensure teenagers really understand the neuroscience of how their brains work, and the impact on their thoughts, feelings and actions.



TRAUMA INFORMED UK™
SCHOOLS & COMMUNITIES

17. Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) Plus Statement 2024/25

17.1 Introduction and Overview

The Conditions of Grant for Pupil Premium state that funding for Cared for after children should be managed by the Virtual School Headteacher. This means that the Virtual School is responsible for monitoring and auditing the use of this funding and ensuring that the money makes a real difference to the individual cared for by the Local Authority. Pupil Premium for Cared for Children cannot be carried forward into a new financial year and must be spent before the end of March or returned to the Department for Education. Therefore, this budget requires careful strategic management.

17.2 As set out in the Virtual School Pupil Premium Policy, the majority of the Pupil Premium funding has been made available to schools to meet the specific needs of individual children in line with the targets on their Personal Education Plan. Specific needs might include attendance at a school residential, additional tuition or access to the support of a Teaching Assistant. However, guidance suggests that “it may be appropriate to pool some pupil premium for activities to benefit the authority’s looked after children more holistically” and W&F Virtual School will be looking forwards to a more needs led model of funding in the future so we pool resources in order to offer Cared for Children enhanced services such as a dedicated Positive Engagement Officer and providing training so that we have even more highly trained staff to meet the additional attachment needs of our children and young people.

17.3 The PPG+ which the Virtual School holds centrally is spent on the following:

- Trauma informed Training including a Diploma course from a highly reputable external provider.
- Alternative Provision and tuition to support children temporarily without a school place (e.g. following a placement move) or who are at risk of exclusion
- Educational Psychology and other private assessments where needed
- Targeted 1:1 Tutoring for children
- IT equipment such as laptops and SMART Tablets
- Literacy resources such as Literacy Gold and Happy Home Learning
- Holiday activities such as Art Workshops
- A contribution towards the staffing costs of the Virtual School team
- Music lessons
- SEMH therapeutic support
- Targeted reading interventions
- Dance clubs

18. Areas of Focus and Development for 2025/26

Priority Area - Improving Outcomes for the Virtual School Children & Young People

- We will develop a Virtual College model
- We will continue and extend our oversight to improve PEP quality
- We will have a Trauma Informed Practice Training Programme
- We will have a Barrow Focus Plan
- We will improve the reading skills of our children
- We will improve our offer and oversight for Children With a Social Worker (CWSW)
- We will develop our BUSS team model
- We will improve attendance particularly for those children at secondary school
- We will build better foster carer and children's home links



Appendix 1: Attainment Breakdown

Note: Local data is taken from NCER Nexus. Headline national CLA data is taken from NCER Nexus or Explore Education Statistics depending on availability.

EYFSP Good Level of Development

Cohort	Cohort 2023/24	W&F 2023/24	National (CLA) 2023/24	Cohort 2024/25	W&F 2024/25	NCER National (CLA) 2024/25
All Pupils	3	67%	41%	7	14%	41%
CLA 12m+	1	0%	39%	1	0%	43%
Autumn-born	0	-	51%	4	25%	50%
Spring-born	1	100%	41%	1	0%	39%
Summer-born	2	50%	29%	2	0%	31%
EHCP	0	-	0%	0	-	4%
SEN Support	1	0%	19%	1	0%	18%
No SEN	2	100%	55%	6	17%	54%

Phonics

Cohort	Cohort 2023/24	W&F 2023/24	National (CLA) 2023/24	Cohort 2024/25	W&F 2024/25	NCER National (CLA) 2024/25
All Pupils	8	50%	59%	5	20%	57%
CLA 12m+	5	40%	60%	1	0%	58%
EHCP	2	0%	16%	2	0%	16%
SEN Support	3	67%	43%	1	0%	42%
No SEN	3	67%	76%	2	50%	78%

Key Stage 2

Reading, Writing, Maths Combined

Cohort	Cohort 2023/24	W&F 2023/24	National (CLA) 2023/24	Cohort 2024/25	W&F 2024/25	NCER National (CLA) 2024/25
All CLA	13	15%	33%	14	43%	34%
CLA 12m+	10	10%	34%	8	50%	35%
EHCP	5	0%	-	2	0%	7%
SEN Support	4	0%	22%	6	50%	25%
No SEN	3	67%	56%	6	50%	58%

Reading

Cohort	Cohort 2023/24	W&F 2023/24	National (CLA) 2023/24	Cohort 2024/25	W&F 2024/25	NCER National (CLA) 2024/25
All CLA	13	23%	53%	14	50%	51%
CLA 12m+	10	10%	53%	8	50%	52%
EHCP	5	0%	20%	2	0%	16%
SEN Support	4	0%	44%	6	50%	46%
No SEN	3	67%	77%	6	67%	78%

Writing TA

Cohort	Cohort 2023/24	W&F 2023/24	National (CLA) 2023/24	Cohort 2024/25	W&F 2024/25	NCER National (CLA) 2024/25
All CLA	13	31%	46%	14	64%	44%
CLA 12m+	10	30%	46%	8	63%	45%
EHCP	5	20%	-	2	50%	10%
SEN Support	4	25%	34%	6	50%	35%
No SEN	3	67%	73%	6	83%	74%

Maths

Cohort	Cohort 2023/24	W&F 2023/24	National (CLA) 2023/24	Cohort 2024/25	W&F 2024/25	NCER National (CLA) 2024/25
All CLA	13	23%	46%	14	50%	46%
CLA 12m+	10	10%	47%	8	63%	47%
EHCP	5	0	-	2	0	13%
SEN Support	4	0%	36%	6	50%	40%
No SEN	3	67%	72%	6	67%	73%

Key Stage 4

All pupils

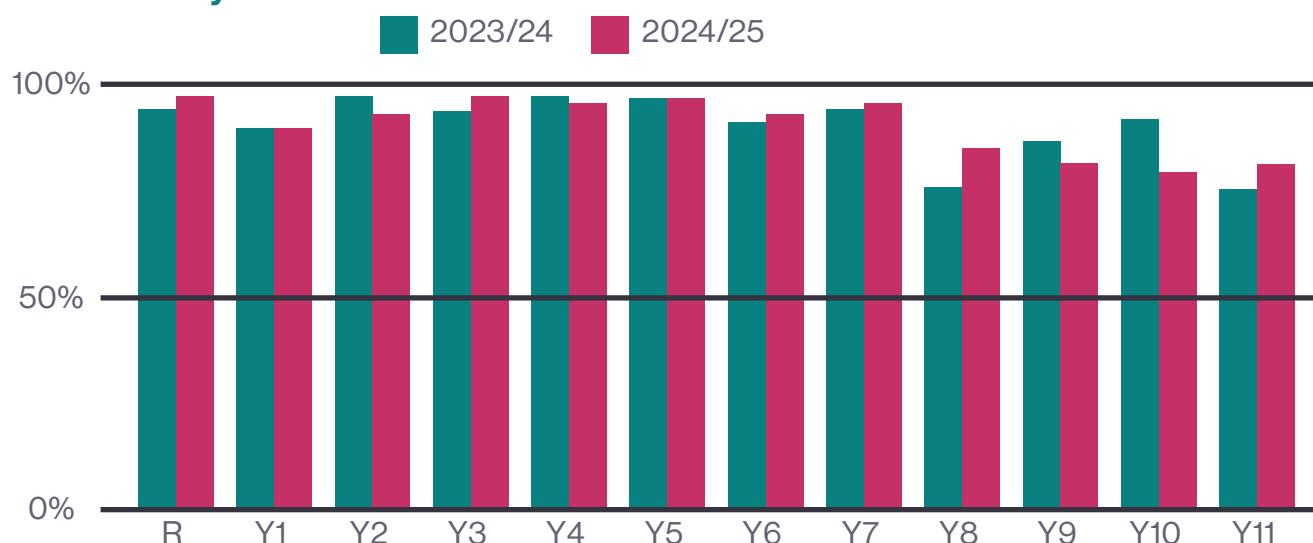
Cohort	Cohort 2023/24	W&F 2023/24	National (CLA) 2023/24	Cohort 2024/25	W&F 2024/25
Attainment 8	27	18.1	18.3	21	TBC
E&M 5+	27	7%	8%	21	24%
E&M 4+	27	26%	17%	21	38%
English 4+	27	37%	24%	21	45%
English 5+	27	22%	16%	21	45%
Maths 4+	27	30%	22%	21	60%
Maths 5+	27	7%	11%	21	25%
No SEN	2	100%	55%	6	17%

All pupils

Cohort	Cohort 2023/24	W&F 2023/24	National (CLA) 2023/24	Cohort 2024/25	W&F 2024/25
Attainment 8	22	17.0	18.3	20	
E&M 5+	22	9%	9%	20	20%
E&M 4+	22	23%	18%	20	38%
English 4+	22	36%	25%	20	40%
English 5+	22	18%	17%	20	45%
Maths 4+	22	27%	24%	20	55%
Maths 5+	22	9%	13%	20	20%
No SEN	2	100%	55%	6	17%

Appendix 2: Attendance Breakdowns

Attendance by NCY



Attendance

Cohort	W&F 2023/24	W&F 2024/25	National 2023/24
All Pupils	89%	89%	89%
CLA 12m+	90%	90%	90%
Primary	94%	95%	95%
Secondary	85%	84%	85%
Mainstream	91%	90%	90%
Maintained Special	93%	82%	87%
Independent Special	89%	92%	-
Eden Schools	96%	81%	-
South Lakes Schools	93%	92%	-
Furness School	86%	90%	-

Persistent absence

Cohort	W&F 2023/24	W&F 2024/25	National 2023/24
All Pupils	32%	32%	26%
CLA 12m+	29%	27%	25%
Primary	14%	10%	13%
Secondary	45%	47%	36%
Mainstream	26%	31%	25%
Maintained Special	0%	40%	30%
Independent Special	30%	19%	-
Eden Schools	18%	47%	-
South Lakes Schools	32%	24%	-
Furness School	37%	33%	-

Appendix 3: Glossary

Term	Definition
BUSS	Building Underdeveloped Sensorimotor Systems
CIN	A child on a Child in Need Plan. A Child in Need is defined by the Children Act 1989 as a child who needs additional help and protection as a result of risks to their development or health. These children are supported by social workers.
CLA	A child who is looked-after by their local authority, who become their corporate parents. The legal term for our children is looked-after child or LAC, but we choose not to use this term in line with the wishes of our children. A child who has been in the care of their local authority for more than 24 ours is a looked-after child according to the legal definition.
CP	Child Protection. A child is placed on a CP Plan if they are at risk of significant harm, as set out in the Children Act 1989. They are supported by a social worker and a team of professionals.
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead. The teacher in a school who takes the lead responsibility for overseeing safeguarding in the school.
DT	Designated Teacher for children in care and previously looked-after children. It is statutory for all schools to have a Designated Teacher, whether they currently have children in care on roll or not.
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage, which comprises the Nursery and Reception years.
EET	Education, employment and/or training
EHCP	Education, health and care plan
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages – courses in ESOL are offered by many colleges
GLD	Good level of development (outcome measured at the end of the EYFS when children are 5)
KS	Key Stage. Key Stages are split as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Stage One: Years 1-2 (age 5-7) • Key Stage Two: Years 3-6 (age 7-11) • Key Stage Three: Years 7-9 (age 11-14) • Key Stage Four: Years 10-11 (age 14-16) • Key Stage 5: Years 12-13 (age 16-18)
NEET	Not in education, employment and/or training
NAVSH	National Association of Virtual School Heads
PEP	Personal Education Plan. All CLA must have a PEP, which should be reviewed every term (three times per year)
PPG	Pupil Premium Grant. This is a grant allocated to the Virtual School Headteacher to be spent on resources, interventions and support to improve educational attainment and progress for CLA.
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child

Care Leavers Local Offer

If you're a care experienced young person (aged 16 to 25) living in the Westmorland and Furness area our local offer and find out what support is available to you.



Translation Services

If you require this document in another format (e.g. CD, Braille or large type) or in another language, please telephone: **0300 373 3300**.

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الاتصال **0300 373 3300**

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