



Virtual School Annual Report 2023/24

‘No decision about me without me’

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Summary:

This annual report summarises activity of the virtual school for the last academic year including:

- The performance of the Virtual School in respect of Key Performance Indicators.
- The achievements and attainment of children looked after by Slough.
- Other Services offered by Slough Virtual School.
- Next steps for Virtual School.

Happy, Safe & Loved, Thriving

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Executive Summary

We are excited to share the Slough Children First Virtual School summary for the 2023-2024 academic year. We have named our report 'no decision about me without me' as this year has seen significant positive changes in the way we are able to support our young people across the organisation to achieve their very best in education. Once again, there are so many things to celebrate, and below are just a few of the highlights. You can read more throughout the report and you're also welcome to make contact, ask questions and let us know what you think. This is your service after all!

Highlights of 2023/24

- We're proud to share that, for the second year in a row, PEP (Personal Education Plan) completion is **100%**, with every young person in our care having a PEP every term.
- We have reviewed **100%** of EHCPs (Education, Health & Care Plans) for children in our care and made sure that their Annual Review happens in a timely manner.
- **Over 95%** of our children in our care attend Good or Outstanding schools.
- Your **results were phenomenal**, especially the GCSE outcomes of children in our care, which exceeded your national and regional peers.
- **100%** of all Key Stage 5 young people that live in Slough received support through the September Guarantee' with more than 93% having an agreed destination
- We currently support **14 care experienced young people to attend university** at Degree or Masters level with bursaries, information, advice and guidance, ensuring that they get the very best out of this very important time in their lives.
- Thanks to your help, our **PEP documents** have been reviewed to ensure that the paperwork talks 'to you' not 'about you' as part of the PEP Meeting.
- We continue to deliver a **comprehensive training package** that gives the team around any 'child known to Social Care' the training and support required to ensure all our young people are afforded the best possible educational opportunities, as well as putting in place support to help professionals manage any education challenges.
- We are considering your needs carefully and assigning you to the most appropriate **Education Champion** to ensure that transition from one day to the next, year to the next and school to the next is as successful as it can possibly be.
- We work closely with our Slough Borough Council colleagues to ensure that Slough Children First has a **Virtual School representative on all education panels** to ensure that you are appropriately represented.
- And most importantly, we strive to ensure **your voice is front and centre** when considering the best possible education, giving you opportunities to be part of the decision making and feedback on what is going well and what needs improving. We believe there should be '**no decision about you without you**'.

Thanks to you, there is so much to celebrate, so if you can, please take the time to read on and hear in more detail how the Virtual School supports you, and other Slough young people, to be successful in education.

Welcome to the Slough Virtual School 2023/24 Annual Report

Wow, what a great year it's been for the young people of Slough and we are so lucky to have been able to play a part of your education journey. Below you will find some of the highlights of 2023/24 and exciting plans for Slough Virtual School moving forward.



First of all, let me introduce myself, I'm Cherie and I am your Virtual School Head. I am proud to lead the Slough Virtual School team that supports you on your education adventure.

The term 'Virtual School' can be confusing. Although some of us are teachers and all of us work with schools, we don't have a physical school here at Slough Children First. What we have is the responsibility for the education of a number of phenomenal individuals who have either come to us as either 'children in our care' or have a social care plan such as 'Child in Need' (CIN) or 'Child Protection' (CP). We also help engage young people who are working with the youth justice team as well as supporting over 5,200 young people in Slough aged 16-18 with their next steps in education, this is called our EET Team (education, employment and training team). All our team have the skills and experience to help find the right place for you to learn and ensure whilst you're there, you are making the very best of your time.



Above is a snapshot of your Virtual School team and the Team Leads are pictured below so you can put a face to the name. At the back of the report you will find all our contact details, as we are keen to ensure you are able to make contact with people that support you. Finally, there is also a glossary to help with some of the acronyms that you may find throughout the document.



Sherry Landa
Lead for EYFS &
Primary Education
and is SENCo



Danielle Thornton
Lead for Secondary
Education &
Transitions



Reem Ali
Lead for the
education,
employment and
training of Care
Experienced 16+



Ewen Godfrey
Lead for the education
of children with a
Social Worker
(CIN/CP)



Selmah Chaudhary
Lead for NEET Team

We have some fantastic things to celebrate this year, so please, sit back and enjoy *your* Annual Report and if you have any questions, ideas or requests, don't be afraid to make contact. Remember, we're here for you!

We're going to start first by exploring your voice and give you some examples of how we have supported you over the last academic year.

What you told us and what happened next

This section highlights some examples of what you have told us, how we have listened and how this has helped you and your learning.

<p>You said</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I have had to change my school and I miss my friends. My new school is nice but I feel a little lonely.	<p>We did</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sometimes it's not possible to arrange a goodbye before you leave but that's ok, we arranged for you to go back and visit some of your friends from your old school and have a proper 'goodbye'.• We also arranged for you to join the football team at your new school	<p>What happened next?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You enjoyed seeing old friends again, you even had cake! Your carer is going to help you keep in touch.• You're really enjoying playing football and this has helped you make new friends. You even received 'man of the match'! Well done, we're so proud of you.
<p>You said</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I'm not cut out for A'Levels, I don't think it's something I want to do. What else is there?	<p>We did</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We worked with you, your Carer, Social Worker and EET Advisor to look at different pathways and found a business apprenticeship.	<p>What happened next?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You are excelling at your apprenticeship and the business can't speak more highly of you. You still have PEPs to focus on your college work and these have been resoundingly positive.
<p>You said</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I am struggling with my anxiety and I'm finding it really difficult to get to school. I have missed a lot of lessons and that's making it feel worse. I don't think I'll ever catch up.	<p>We did</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We recognise that your mental health is really important and we need to support you to feel comfortable to start learning again. We worked with your school to support online learning and a reintegration plan. We also got you a tutor to help you catch up and get ahead of the game. We made sure your voice was heard and worked around your tricky days.	<p>What happened next?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You have worked with the team and now successfully returned to school. We're so proud of you. With a lot of hard work, you've caught up and are on track to reach your predicted grades. Next stop, college!

You said

- I don't like PEPs online, I can't really hear and I don't get to see you.

We did

- We had to move PEPs online when we were experiencing Covid and schools were not accepting visitors. However, we have listened and PEPs are all face to face now unless you request otherwise.

What happened next?

- You are happy to see your advocate at school and be part of the decision making. You take an active part in your learning and working together, make important decisions about your education.

You said

- I'm worried that if I don't get my Maths GCSE I won't get onto the college course I want.

We did

- We arranged for a Maths Tutor. They worked out a plan to get you through your exam and increase your maths confidence.

What happened next?

- You have now passed your maths exam and have started your motor mechanics course. We're super proud of you and will be with you every step of the way!

You said

- I really love art but I don't have much stuff, can you help?

We did

- We funded a selection of art materials and spoke to your school about having access to art equipment and a space to practice. We are also arranging for you to continue your Art GCSE when you move to college.

What happened next?

- You've produced some amazing art works some of which we have shared in this report and we are proud to display in our offices. I am so excited for your future!

You said

- I don't want to sit and talk to the adults in my new school even though I know they want to help me settle in. I find it tricky.

We did

- We talked to your school about some of your favourite things and worked out a plan to make you feel more comfortable. You love Lego, so we put a plan together which we hoped would work for everyone.

What happened next?

- Although it's still early days, you are starting to settle in and talk to your trusted adults. Your 'Lego time' seems to now be the best time of the day and we are confident that having the space to talk will help you excel.

You said

- I really want to get better at my science but I don't want a tutor. Can you help?

We did

- We talked to you about how you learn best and arranged for you to have a laptop to access activities and learning videos and sourced accompanying books to support your learning.

What happened next?

- You are enjoying this style of learning and we are starting to see an improvement in your Science. We have also shared this with school as a preferred learning style.

You said

- I am new to the country and speak very little English. How am I going to manage?

We did

- Before you started formal education we supplied you with a tablet with language apps. We also arranged for you to meet other young people in the same position and then found a school that welcomed you and supported you in your own language whilst you learnt English.
- We also managed to find you a football team for UASC and supplied boots so you can join in.

What happened next?

- You have settled in really well and have already started to join mainstream classes. You have made friends both inside and out of school and you actively took part in your PEP. Well done, we're really proud of you!

You said

- I need equipment to do my music production degree coursework.



We did

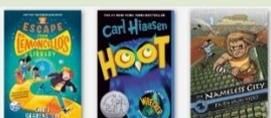
- We supplied you with a laptop and specialist software to support your course. We also explored a pathway in music production so that you can make plans for your future.

What happened next?

- You have now started a degree in music production and we can't wait to see where this leads. The work you have already produced is amazing!

You said

- I really love reading, especially the mystery and adventure books.



We did

- We made sure that we sent you a special parcel in the post with the newest of the books and also sent you other books and vouchers through our literacy programme 'Parcel in the Post'.

What happened next?

- Your carer tells us you are really enjoying reading and can't wait to receive more books. We will always explore your interests with you and make sure the books we send stretch your imagination even further!

You said

- I don't find change very easy and I'm worried about starting a new class with my new teacher.

We did

- We arranged for you to spend some time with your new teacher and visit your new class. We even managed to get you some pictures to share at home. Your new teacher also set you a fun project to complete over the holiday.

What happened next?

- You were able to talk about your new class with your important people and show them pictures.
- You completed your project and took it in on your first day to show your new teacher. You even ended up sharing it in 'show and tell' and your confidence has increased massively and you're settling in well. Well done you!



Collaborations – How are we supporting others to support you?

It's important that we work closely with those that support your learning to ensure you have access to the best possible educational opportunities. This doesn't just mean working with your teachers, although that's really important, we also work with lots of other people to ensure education is high on the agenda, for example...

Education Training for Social Workers

Your Virtual School offers education training for your social workers and other colleagues at Slough Children First. These sessions cover a number of education related subjects such as 'setting PEP targets' and 'understanding special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)' along with all sorts of other subjects. As well as our team delivering training, over the last year we have also engaged specialist training from mental health services, our local Alternative Provision colleagues and through our social work academy. We have covered subjects such as 'Language that Cares' and 'Emotionally Based School Refusal', 'Executive Functioning' and the 'PACE Trauma Informed Approach'. We review our training offer every year, talking to you, your social worker and other professionals to ensure our social workers have the best possible knowledge to support your learning.

As well as the training, we also offer one to one assistance to any Slough Children First professional who has education questions, and we make sure they're fully supported if they need to advocate on your behalf.

Training for Teachers and Education Leaders

Training for teachers and education leaders is massively important. We want to make sure that your school delivers the best possible education and ensure that any barriers to your learning are removed. As part of our training offer, we provide an all-day event designed for Designated Teachers and Designated Safeguarding Leads with focus areas such as:

- Setting Appropriate Targets and Making the best of the PEP
- Understanding the impact of Trauma on Learning
- Avoiding Conflict
- Statutory Responsibilities in relation to Children with a Social Worker
- Supporting Transition
- Improving and maintaining Attendance

In addition, we offer schools bespoke training on request or when things aren't going as well as we would like. We make personal visits, support extra interventions and fund specific training to ensure that a young person's specific needs can be met (for example, specialist diagnosis training such as Autism). Sometimes things can get tricky, and schools may need extra support to meet your needs, Virtual School offer training and support either directly, or via other services to ensure the school can continue to support you and give you the best chance to reach your potential.

Finally, as well as the training days, we offer ad-hoc training throughout the academic year. This coming year we have subjects such as PACE, Executive Functioning and 'knowing me, knowing you'.

Education Training for Carers

It's really important that your carers are able to confidently work alongside you and where needed, advocate on your behalf. We work alongside our Slough Independent Fostering Agency colleagues to offer sessions around:

- Supporting Learning at Home
- Understanding Assessment
- Admissions and Attendance
- Understanding Special Educational Needs and Seeking Support
- How to support if things get tricky – Suspensions & Exclusions

Alongside this, we offer training for individual carers on specialist subjects and also support for homes where you may be living with other young people in our care.

Other training

We know that it can be tricky navigating education and the other things going on in your life. We also know that there can be other people involved in decision making. Virtual School seek to ensure that all people involved in your pathway understand the importance of your education, this includes, for example, working with people in commissioning and visiting tutors, ensuring that we do not compromise on quality, whilst ensuring we make best use of public funds.

How we're ensuring a quality service



It's important that we continually take a good look at our service and make sure all our young people have access to the best possible opportunities. As you know, every young person in our care in statutory education has a review of their education provision every term, this is called a PEP (Personal Education Plan). We are also working hard to ensure that your voice is heard by attending your PEP in person alongside your social worker and the people who look after you. Face to face PEPs are important for many reasons, for example, they give virtual school colleagues the opportunity to see that your school is the best it can be and helps ensure that you are an active part of the meeting, as we believe there should be **'no decisions about you without you'**.



Also as part of regular practice, we routinely quality assure your PEPs. We want to be sure that they are timely, comprehensive and that your Targets are SMART. We quality assure the content completed by others (for example your School and Social Worker) to make sure the information is up to date and relevant. We offer feedback to all parties and report on our PEP completions and where necessary, offer additional training to ensure quality of service.

In this last academic year 2023-24 we're really proud to say our PEP returns are as follows:

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
100%	100%	100%

On a rare occasion a PEP may be delayed for issues outside of our control. However, in all these cases, it has completed as soon thereafter as is possible and always within the same term.

Every young person in our care will have a PEP for every academic term, even if they are not in formal education. On these occasions we have completed what we call an 'informal' PEP. The Informal PEP has just as much value as our academic PEP, but these focus more on how we're supporting you to get back into education and what we're doing in the meantime. We sometimes use informal PEPs when we want to check in on your progress in between formal PEPs. This helps ensure everyone has a clear idea of what your plan is and what we can all do to help.

I am really pleased to share that over 85% of you are now experiencing your PEP face to face. We listened to your comments and visit you in school or at a place that works for you. What matters is that you are part of the decision making and our view is that, where possible...

"no decision about education should be made about you, without you"

Supporting you in Education

Although we have a statutory obligation to review your education termly, our service does not stop there. We know that things change and that you may need support outside of the PEP timetable. This is not an issue. Each young person in our care has their own highly qualified Education Champion and they will be keeping an eye on your education throughout the year. So, if you're having a challenge and you need their help, they are there for you. You will meet your advocate at your PEP meeting, but you can always contact them through your Carer,

Social Worker or Designated Teacher at any other time.

Each of our advocates also have a 'this is me' that gives you their contact information and a little bit of insight into who they are. Please ask if you haven't seen one, we're always happy to hand them out.



Hi, I'm Cherie

I'm the Virtual School Headteacher. It's a funny name because although I'm a teacher, my role isn't in the classroom. I'm here to make sure you get the very best educational opportunities, ensure your voice is heard and support you to make the best choices about your future career. You have someone who helps you with education at your PEP Meeting and my job is to support them too. So, if there's ever anything I can help you with, please contact me.

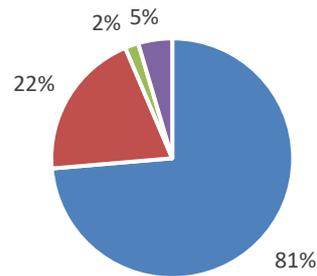
- My favourite things to do are to go to the beach for a paddle and snuggle with my dog, Kipper.
- My favourite food is cheesy mashed potato.
- My favourite music is Take That (yes, I know, but I'm old!)
- And my party trick is that I can do the splits

You can contact me or on the telephone 07710 153662 or by email cherie.sears@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk

I'm really proud to be part of your education journey and can't wait to hear all about your progress!

What type of Schools do Slough Children in our Care attend?

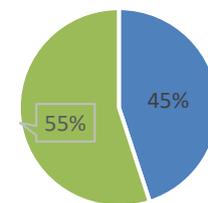
Slough Virtual School are keen to ensure that you have education that meets your particular needs. We always look to place you in a school that can help bring out the best in you and of course, we will listen to you about your thoughts and feelings. The diagram beside shows what type of schools our young people attend.



■ Mainstream ■ Special ■ Alternative Provision ■ Residential

How many are of you are educated outside of Slough?

Some of you are able to remain in Slough when you come into our care and others are outside of the area. Wherever you live, we will always ensure we find the best possible education for you.

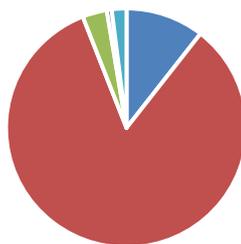


■ In Slough ■ Outside of Slough

How good are your schools?

It's really important that you have a good quality of education and we work hard to ensure that wherever you are educated, in whatever type of school, the curriculum meets your needs and you are afforded the best opportunities to succeed. One of our measures is your school's overall Ofsted grading. At the end of the academic year 2023/24, more than 94% of you are in schools or colleges graded good or outstanding and only 1 considered inadequate.

■ Outstanding
 ■ Good
 ■ Requires Improvement
 ■ Inadequate
 ■ Yet to be inspected



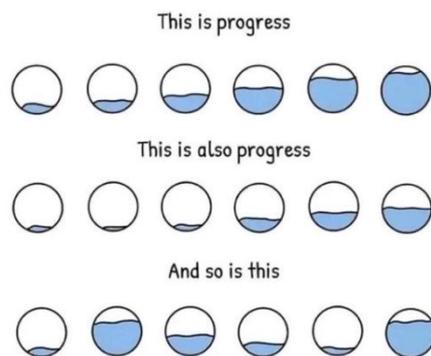
	Number	%
Outstanding	16	10%
Good	127	84%
Requires Improvement	5	3%
Inadequate	1	<1%
'Yet to be' or 'otherwise' inspected	3	2%

You might be attending a school which is currently graded 'Requires Improvement', 'inadequate' or 'Yet to be Inspected'. We have a very close relationship with all our schools, but especially these ones. We want to ensure that despite any Ofsted inspection outcomes, your outcomes are not impacted. Be assured that we will only consider a change of school if we feel this is absolutely necessary and in your best interests and be assured, we will always discuss this with you. Remember, 'no decision about you without you'. We may, however, visit more regularly, hold additional PEP Meetings, check in with other adults working with you and generally keep a close eye. Just because a school has a judgement, does not necessarily mean that judgement will have a

direct impact on your learning. If it does, we will always act to make sure you are not affected.

Be assured we don't rely solely on Ofsted gradings, as this is only a snapshot in time. The Virtual School team continually monitor and review the quality of your education and visit regularly. Know that we will always act to ensure you have the best possible education for you, and we will challenge when things are not quite right. We are incredibly lucky to have such great schools both locally and nationally and supporting you isn't just our number one priority, it's theirs too.

How you're doing – Statutory Assessments and Next Steps



Your Virtual School constantly monitors your progress through your PEP. Your progress is a really important indicator as to how you are getting on and it can also tell us if things aren't quite right, you need support or something needs to change.

We recognise that things going on outside of school can impact how things are going at school and that's why we work hard with the key adults in your life to ensure that there is support available in school when you need a little extra help.

As well as the Virtual School monitoring your progress, the government set out statutory testing throughout your education. On the next few pages you will see how young people got on at each stage of statutory testing.

EYFS and Primary Statutory Data

We make sure that we monitor your progress throughout your time at school, sometimes this is measured through statutory tests. Below are brief details about our young people taking tests this year and what type of test it is. Also, in the back of this report, you can find a more detailed report on outcomes.

It is important to note that we see all our children as more than just an exam result and your targets and outcomes are based on all of the great things you do, not just how you perform against others.

End of EYFS (end of Reception year) profile data - how you did in the 17 strands of learning and whether you achieved a "Good Level of Development" (GLD).

5 of you were part of this cohort and 3 of you achieved what is called "a good level of development". Everyone is working very hard and the other two of you are receiving support, or have an EHCP to help you.

Year 1 Phonics screening – you took a test asking you to read real and made-up words. This is scored out of 40 and the pass mark is 32.

We had 6 of you in this cohort, 3 passed, 1 of you was only 2 marks from passing and the other two of you are currently receiving additional support and have EHCP applications in process.

Year 2 Phonics resit- *this is the same as the above except this year, Year 2s had to take this in December and then repeat it in June if you scored less than 32 the first-time round.*

1 of you took this exam and you improved your result.

Year 2 SATs - *these are tasks you did in class as part of your normal work, during May and June. Your teacher scored your Reading and Maths and then assessed your Writing over the year. 100 or more in Reading and Maths means you are at expected levels, under 100 you are Working Towards*

3 of you were reported on and all 3 of you have additional needs that we are supporting. We are proud that all of you did as expected or better.

Year 4 Times tables test – *this is a test on the computer where you had 6 seconds to recall your tables and answer the question. This is scored out of 25.*

There is no threshold in this assessment but we are pleased to say that all those who took the exam were as expected and some at greater depth. 2 of you achieved 25/25 and another of you 24/25.

Year 6 SATs – *these are a variety of tests you sat in May. We asked for your Reading, SPAG and Maths scores. 100 or more means you are at expected levels, under 100 you are Working Towards.*

7 of you sat year 6 SATs and 2 of those held EHCPs. We had some great results with all of you working either at or above what we were expecting.

Overall, we are proud of the outcomes for our children and young people in EYFS and primary and we have seen some excellent examples of progress. Remember, this is about you, not how you measure up against others. Throughout your education we will work with you on targets that reflect your ability and aspirations.

Key Stage 4 – GCSE Outcomes



The DfE released the provisional markers for Progress 8 which has allowed us to compile data analysis on the Progress 8 and Attainment 8 data for our 2023/24 GCSE cohort. 'Progress 8' and 'Attainment 8' are national measures of progress. There are more details of these in the appendices and glossary at the back of this document.

Our statutory requirement is to report on all children looked after that have been in our care for more than 12 months on the date of the first exam, this gave us a cohort for 2024. This is known as the reportable cohort.

We celebrate that you, our cohort, is diverse and has many positive characteristics. However, not everyone finds education easy and some of you have challenges that we try our very best to support with. We know you try the best you can given the circumstances you can sometimes find yourself in, for example, some of you were new to our care and others may have experienced mental health crisis or other challenges in your life.

Sometimes things have changed significantly since you took your SATs, you may not have been in school for some time or perhaps needed the support of an EHCP and some of you may be new to the country. As we know, these factors can have a significant impact on such a small cohort. However, Slough children in our care outcomes still exceeded both the national and regional trends and we are so proud of you all!

You will find a comprehensive breakdown of your results in the appendices at the back of this report but on the next page you will find the headlines.

The *provisional* data (I have to put a caveat on the measurement data until the DfE publish formal CLA yard sticks in April 2025) showing the *developing combined scores* for GCSEs are as follows:

Provisional Attainment 8 for the reportable Slough cohort is	31.06
Provisional Progress 8 for the reportable Slough cohort is	- 0.84

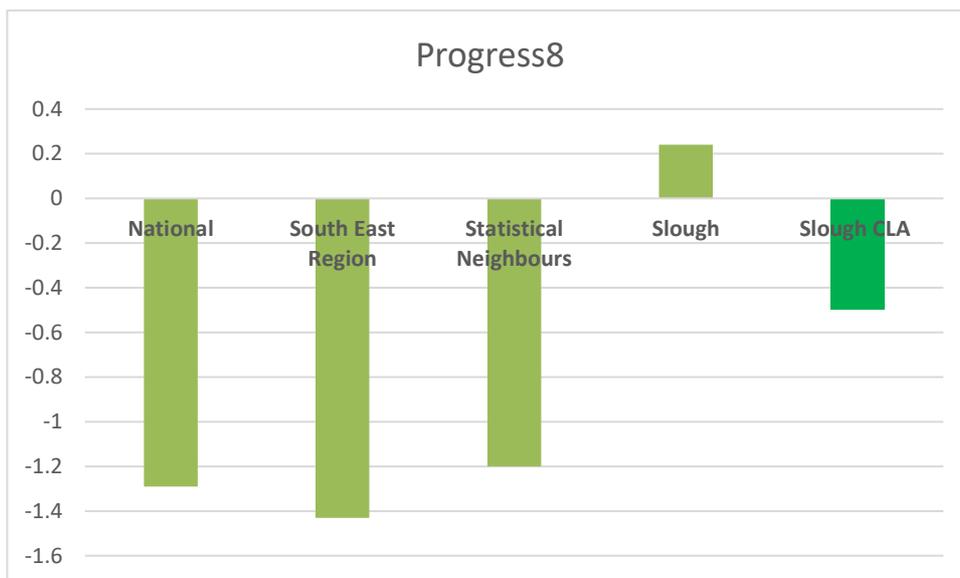
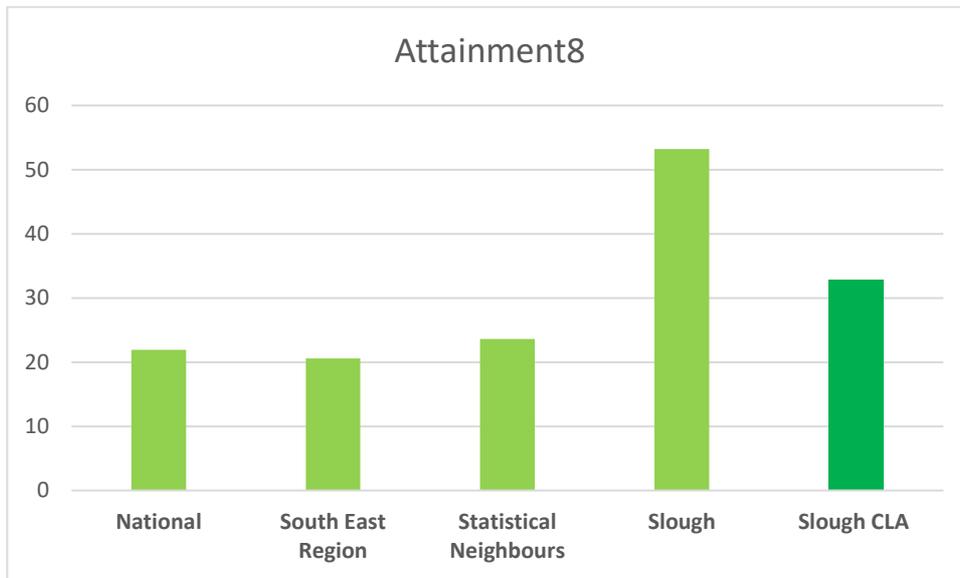
Below is the data from the NCER showing data trends for the year. They show data for the 'reportable cohort' whereas we have shown the whole cohort. You can find more details in the appendices.



KS4 Att8/Prog8 Benchmark (CLA)

	Cohort	Prog. Cov.	KS2 PAG (mean)*	Overall	
				Avg. At8 Score	Avg. Pr8 Score
NCER National (CLA pupils)	5,390	92.0%	0.0 (--)	21.9	-1.29
DfE Region - South East (CLA)	780	92.0%	0.0 (--)	20.6	-1.43
Statistical Neighbours (CLA pupils)	370	91.0%	0.0 (--)	23.6	-1.20
Local Authority - Slough (all schools)	2,507	90.3%	-	53.2	+0.24
Virtual School - Slough	12	83.3%	-	32.8	-0.50

You will see that the national Progress8 benchmark for CLA is -1.29 and the South East region -1.43, Slough CLA did much better with our outcome of -0.84. You will also note the Attainment 8 scores nationally are 21.9 with South East region 20.6, our young people achieved an average of 31.06*. (*this is emerging data and therefore may be subject to change).



Key stage 5

The reportable cohort of 45 was very diverse this year in a number of ways. Of young people in this age group, 89% of you had some form of additional needs, including 16% of you holding EHCPs, 50% requiring additional support in learning and a further 34% of you 'new to the country' with English not as your first language (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children) UASC. Only 3 of our young people took traditional A Levels this year but others of you have been successful in other ways, such as apprenticeships and employment.

Of those Key Stage 5 that were in education in 2023/24, 85% either continued or have taken employment.

Our young people that were on the key stage 5 pathway all went on to university and were joined by another 2 young people who have been working on access pathways in the last year. We have young people this year studying nursing, drama, accounting and aeronautical engineering.

Not everyone is ready to remain in education or employment. Of those of you not in education, employment or training (NEET) we are working hard to find a solution. We recognise some of you are not ready and others have medical needs or challenges that we must focus on. Know that we will never give up and will always continue to help you find the best possible plan at the best time and just because you're 18 now, that does not mean that support has ended, both your PA and the Virtual School will always be there to offer advice and guidance.

Our university cohort

Virtual School are keen to continue to support our Care Leavers that remain in education and we are proud to have 14 of you supported on university courses.



12 of you are studying at Bachelor level, 1 is studying at Masters and another following a medical doctorate pathway.

All of you continue to receive the support of Virtual School, including help with bursaries and signposting.

Apprenticeships for Care Experienced young people

Virtual School is committed to all types of pathways for our young people, including Apprenticeships. In fact, we engage in this not only with external organisations but also within our own Virtual School Team.

This year Virtual School celebrated the completion of our second Care Experienced Apprenticeship programme with our young person going on to pursue a career in administration within Slough Children First. We are so very proud that she's chosen to stay within the 'family business'.

We are excited to embark on a further Care Experienced apprenticeship in the Virtual School and we're not alone. Slough's Care Experienced Apprenticeship programme over 2023/24 has seen a further 2 young people successfully commenced the pathway.



Slough Children First and Slough Borough Council are looking to employ many more young people, giving them the opportunity to learn and flourish and reinforcing our commitment to our corporate family and 'growing your own'. If you are interested in an apprenticeship, please speak to your Education Champion or Personal Advisor (PA) for more details.

SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)



Many of you have received some sort of extra support either for your academic attainment, to support your emotional health and well-being or to help with every day tasks. This may look like a small group intervention in school, or ELSA (see glossary) or perhaps a nurture groups. Additional support can also take place outside of school such as tutoring, play therapy or counselling.

Some of you need more support than a school can give you in the budget they get from the Government. If this is the case, your

school or setting will apply for something called an EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan). This is a statutory document which sets out your needs and how your teachers should meet those needs. It includes any medical needs you have and also what your social worker's role is in helping you stay safe and achieve. It may include things like physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy where you need support from those services. Once you have one of these plans they are reviewed annually if you are over five and six-monthly if you are under 5. Your views, those of your parents and carers are sought for each review.

In August 2024, 99 of you received some sort of SEN report (48% of the cohort) and 49 of you had an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP). This is around 24% of our school age cohort. Nationally, the figure is much lower, but it's not unusual for the percentage to be higher in Virtual School as we look after young people that have disabilities as well as those in our care for other reasons. Between August 2023 and August 2024 we made sure that **100% of EHC plans were reviewed within time scales and your voice was heard.**

At Virtual School part of our job is to ensure that everyone's needs are being met. If you have a special educational need (SEND) then we will work with your school to tailor your education, giving you the very best opportunity to be successful.

If you have an EHCP, we will ensure it is up-to-date and reflects your current need and that you are being educated in the best possible place to meet those needs. Sometimes that means you may change schools or education providers. The most important thing for us is that you are happy in school, love to learn and are supported to reach your potential and realise your dreams. Don't forget to talk to your Virtual School champion if you feel you'd like some further advice or guidance.

SiaSS (*Safer in a Slough School*) Supporting Children with a Social Worker

As well as supporting the children in our care, Slough Virtual School also supports young people known to Social Care that may have a CIN (Child in Need) or CP (Child Protection) Plan, as well as those known to the Early Help team. This is a relatively new service that the government is supporting, as data indicates that young people with a Social Worker have some of the poorest academic outcomes nationally. With this in mind, it's really important that we change the narrative.

In Slough we continue to develop a package of support for professionals that helps make sure that they secure and maintain the best possible education opportunities for all our young people, this may include you. Some of the things we do include:

- Offering training and development to Teachers, Social Workers, and other professionals
- An online and in person support service giving information advice and guidance to those supporting our young people
- Representing Children with a Social Worker at Council meetings such as Fair Access Panel, Children Missing Education, and Keeping Children Safe in Education Panel, CAMHS/MHST and SEND to ensure that any young people known to us are advocated for and any services required from the meetings are managed
- Monitoring the attendance of all children subject to a CIN or CP Plan and offering intervention to those in need of support
- Advocacy and other support for you, your families and other professionals if you find yourselves subject to suspension or exclusion
- Working alongside other services to ensure that if you are in crisis, we are able to get the support you need without unnecessary delay



This year we introduced a new person to the team. Tina will focus on both attendance and helping social workers, families and schools to support young people back into education and ensure they have a sustainable pathway. Tina is already making a massive difference to a number of young people and her support and persistence has seen much improved attendance to some of our most hard to reach young people.

This service can be accessed by the SiaSS Lead, Ewen Godfrey, through the helpline. You can find his details, alongside all the team's contact details, at the end of the report.

Previously Looked After Children and those in Kinship Care arrangements

The Virtual School has a responsibility to support the educational achievement of previously looked after children and those in Kinship Care arrangements in Slough. It's important that, if this applies to you, you remain open to the best possible educational opportunities and support. So how can the Virtual School help?

Virtual School offers advice and information to parents, guardians, schools, social care and any other professionals working with the family. We also offer training and advocacy.

This year alone we have represented families needing support with admissions, SEND and sadly, sometimes even exclusions. We will always help to ensure your rights are preserved and you can access education without judgement.

You can access this service through our SiaSS Team Lead, Ewen Godfrey. His details are available at the end of this document.

The Education, Employment & Training Team for Care Experienced Young Adults

Our Post 16 Education, Employment & Training team (ETE) support our Care Experienced young adults with information, advice, support and guidance, regardless of their location, that helps navigate next steps in education and future careers.

The team ensures that all of you aged between 16-18 continue to have a Personal Education Plan (PEP), even if you are not in traditional education. They will also seek out opportunities for those of you that may be feeling like you can't engage in ETE right now. Our team works with Social Workers, PAs and other professionals to help support the Pathway to adulthood.

It doesn't just stop at 18 now though, **this coming year we will be offering advice and guidance to anyone 18+** who needs a little extra support. We are working with your PAs to offer support to those of you who may be struggling to work out your next steps. We can offer help with CVs, finding courses, signposting to organisations that can help with specific questions and that you are receiving the right work or education entitlements.

If you want any further information about this, please contact Reem Ali, 16+ Lead for Care Experienced young adults. Her details are at the end of this document.

Education, Employment & Training for Post 16 Slough residents

As well as their support of Children Looked After and Care Experienced young people, the Virtual School team also have the statutory responsibility of reporting on destinations of **all** young people living in Slough moving through key stage 5 (age 16-18yrs), this is called the 'September Guarantee'. The 'September Guarantee' is a guarantee of an offer, made by the end of September and monitored throughout the academic year, of an appropriate place in post-16 education or training for every young person completing compulsory education.

Ensuring that every young person in Slough has an offer of a place to progress onto is particularly important as it helps you make a seamless transition into post-16 learning or employment with training. The September Guarantee is an offer of a place in one of the following:

- A school sixth form
- A college of further education
- Employment with training to at least level 2
- An apprenticeship

We monitor and support young people in education, employment and training throughout the year and the government measures our progress.

The Summer (May) NEET figures for Slough, the South East and England are listed below.

	Slough	Southeast	England
NEET	4.7%	3.2%	3.5%
Not known	0.5%	2.9%	1.8%
NEET + Not known	5.2%	6.1%	5.2%

The 'Not Known' figure is a very important part of the data. These are the young people where we are not sure what they are currently doing, this may be because they have moved out of area.

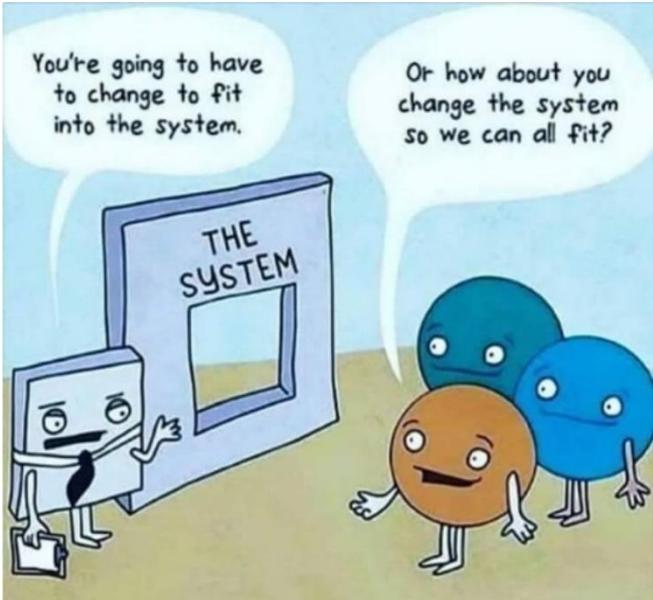
Our team not only track our young people by phone and letter, but also visit face to face to ensure no one is missed. You will note our 'Not Known' figure is much lower than those locally or nationally, as we are tireless in our pursuit of those young people.

Our NEET figures are higher than average, but there are some local issues that all young people in Slough face, including a limited range in the local offer for Key Stage 5. Nearing the end of the academic year colleges are reluctant to take new students, meaning they effectively become NEET until the September and we must also recognise in this number, some that either are unable to engage in Education, Employment or Training at this time, or perhaps choose not to. Again, the team work tirelessly to engage and encourage you, looking for packages outside of the norm and working intensively in one to one sessions building CVs and seeking opportunities for you.

You can reach our Post 16 Team through their lead, Selmah Chaudhary, who's details are available at the end of this report.

Suspensions and Exclusions

Sadly, sometimes things don't always turn out right and whilst we know you try your best, sometimes there is a blip that means you experience a suspension or exclusion. When this happens we are here to support you, not just for the suspension, but also after to avoid any reoccurrence.



We are pleased to say that **there have been no permanent exclusions this year**. However, we have experienced a number of suspensions. We investigate each fully and work with both the professionals and young people to minimise any repeat. However, some of you experience crisis, especially during periods of change, such as new term, new class, new teacher and perhaps new home or social worker, all of which can have an impact on how we are feeling and our behaviour.

We know that behaviour can be a tool for communication and whilst it's never favourable to have a suspension, it can be the evidence we need to consider what's going on for you and if necessary, change things or engage more support. For example, it may indicate to us that the school you are in isn't quite the right fit for you or that you need some further help or perhaps it's time for an EHCP.

Below are our suspension figures for the 2023-24 academic year. You will notice some trends, but most importantly, that **generally, suspensions show signs of reducing.**

Autumn Term 2023	No Days	No Children	EHCP?
Primary	17	4	2
Secondary	19	5	2

Spring Term 2024	No Days	No Children	EHCP?
Primary	2 ↓	1 ↓	1 ↓
Secondary	17.5 ↓	3 ↓	2 =

Summer 2024	No Days	No Children	EHCP?
Primary	2 ↓	1 ↓	1 ↓
Secondary	13 ↓	4 ↑	2 =

The **Autumn** Term can be tricky for some of you, particularly if you are changing school, moving to college or even settling into a new class. We welcomed a number of new young people at the beginning of the year and those young people also faced school moves. This can be overwhelming, especially for those with additional needs, but you can see by Spring, things start to settle.

Spring suspensions were much reduced, but you will see that in the **Summer**, a couple of our young people in secondary were in difficulty. 10 of the 13 days can be attributed to 2 young people. One young person was struggling with mainstream and we are seeking an EHCP to support them. The other young person has experienced some upheaval in their life which has made navigating school also a little tricky. Whatever the issue though, we will always support you and ensure that your voice is heard. We never take suspensions lightly, but know that they are always investigated, scrutinised for fairness, challenged if necessary and plans are put in place to avoid any repeat.

If you'd like more information or to discuss a suspension you may have experienced, you can find these either in your PEP or you can ask your Virtual School champion.

Celebrating you...

On to more positive things and as always, you give us so much to celebrate. We are, of course, really proud of your academic achievements but our young people have so many other talents and things to be proud of from phenomenal horse riding skills to sports and arts.



We heard that P made 'player of the year' in their rugby team and is now on the woman's England Rugby pathway. What an achievement, we are ridiculously proud of you!

M's horse riding is her most favourite thing to do and it's not just her favourite hobby, she's also competing. We're really enjoying hearing all about her competitions and achievements, well done M!

Since leaving school, S has wanted to work in the hair and beauty industry. We have been supporting her to find college courses and also sourcing work experience in hair salons that offer styling for wigs. She has recently finished a course, and alongside her experience in nail art she hopes to find work in the industry and eventually open her own business. We are supporting her with an application to the Princes Trust and can't wait to see what she does next!



And what about M... just look at this artwork! We are so very proud of what he's produced and so are his school. M wasn't going to take art as a GCSE but with a little persuasion, he has decided to take Art as an additional GCSE. He's going to smash it!



And finally, we couldn't be prouder of A, who beat over 500 other nominees to be a young finalist at this years 'Children & Young People Now' Awards. Virtual School nominated him for his amazing strength of character, progress and supporting others through participation. He had a great time at the event in London before heading back to university. Well done A, what an achievement!

There are so many stories to share and we'd love to hear yours. Let your education champion know if you've got something to share. We'd love to celebrate with you.



Other great things going on in Virtual School

We wanted to let you know what other great things have been going on in Virtual School for all our young people.

Whilst we are keen to ensure you have access to traditional education pathways, we also believe that education can come in a variety of ways and there are many learning opportunities that come from other experiences. With that in mind, here's some of the other ways that Virtual School is supporting you.

Book Parcels



Each young person in our care in Primary phase receives specially selected books to support both their learning and interests outside of school.

Those of you in our secondary and post 16 phase are also given the option to read for pleasure and receive Book Tokens that give the independence to purchase materials that ignite your reading passion. Alongside this, we support additional learning materials that help you with your school work, such as SATs or GCSE revision books and equipment.



Virtual School keen to support reading for pleasure and encourage all our young people to engage. Would you like to know more? Please contact Sherry Landa, our Literacy Lead at Virtual School. You'll find her details on the contact page.

Activities packages

When you tell us about your interests, where we can, we like to support and encourage that learning. For example, Virtual School has sent out Art packages for a number of young people as well as kit for other areas of interest such as engineering and sports.



We have also supported schools to purchase specific interest toys to share with our young people when they are engaging in one to one or planned interventions. We have funded equipment that allows our young people to be successful during break times and gives you opportunities to build and maintain positive relationships. We look to engage you in other activities that support learning and help express emotions such as music. Virtual School always try to be creative in encouraging learning and are keen to hear of ideas to support positive engagement. Speak to your Education Champion if you'd like to know more.



Transitions and new beginnings



Change can be tricky and we want to ensure all our young people have the best possible endings and new beginnings. With that in mind, when you reach an important transition, such as leaving primary school, we can support you with simple things like memory books where they can collect contact details and share memories of great times. We will also support funding a final transition trip.

As well as happy endings, there's also new beginnings and for some, this can be tricky. We like to make sure you have the right equipment and stationery, laptops and books, as well as sending cards of encouragement and regular check ins with your education champion.



Aspirational adventures



Over the year we have been working with Future Pathways to understand how higher education works for you and what it takes to get to university. There have been a number of opportunities for you to explore the pathway and learn key practical and social skills along the way. We hope to expand this over the next academic year and can't wait to get more of our young people involved. Watch this space!

We have also arranged for some of you to visit careers fairs and scheduled special one to one careers guidance sessions, working alongside your schools, to ensure that you are on the right pathway to follow your dreams.



Aspirations aren't exclusively for our teenagers. We have been



working with some of our primary young people who are interested in Grammar School. You have had the opportunity to explore local Grammar Schools and we're supporting some of you with tuition in readiness for your 11+ or other entrance exams. Each of you have an individual plan as part of your PEP and we will continue to support you wherever your results take you.

Next year we hope to expand these opportunities further and look at early aspirations, understanding what it is you'd like to do when you're an adult and how we can help you. There is a special event for our primary children arranged for the spring term.

Summer Fun!

Virtual School believe learning should always be fun and shouldn't stop at the end of term.



This year our secondary team arranged some summer fun for our young people who were starting at new schools or experiencing another transition. It was a exciting packed day with some phenomenal activities that were not only fun but also worked on courage, problem solving and working together. There were lots of new friends made and great stories to tell, especially the giant swing and climbing wall. We hope to do the same this year and if you're interested in joining us, please let your education champion know.

Slough Celebration Event



Slough Children First hosted our annual Celebration Event and what a great day we all had! The event took place in May 2024 here in Slough.



There was masses to do and see. The activities included arts, dance, sports, face painting, story corner, disco, great food and so much more.



You came in your masses and we had the opportunity to celebrate your successes with families and the team at our special awards ceremony.



The event was very much enjoyed and we can't wait to welcome you back again next year!

Virtual School Plans for the Future



We always keen to celebrate the great outcomes you, our young people, have achieved, but we are also looking to the future. Across the Virtual Team we have professionals with the experience to guide you through your next steps no matter what you're thinking of. From Early Years to Primary, Primary to Secondary, Secondary to Post 16 and beyond!

We are always thinking one step ahead to ensure that before you reach transition, you have a clear plan of what next. Don't forget, **your voice is really important** and we will take time to make sure you lead the way in your education pathway, that's why we come and visit you and look forward to hearing from you directly, not just through the PEP. Remember, we believe there should be 'no decision about you without you'.

Don't forget, you don't have to wait until your PEP to share your thoughts and ideas, you can contact your education champion anytime and at the end of this report you will find contact numbers and emails for the team. We're here to help you get the very best out of your education and support you along the way.

This coming year we have even more exciting opportunities. We are looking forward to more aspirational trips and visits, further opportunities to expand your education outside of the classroom and making sure you have everything you need to access your courses.

We will also be focussing on how we can better support our young people with a social care plan (CIN/CP) and continue on our 'lifelong learning' pathway as we believe your education doesn't stop at 18!

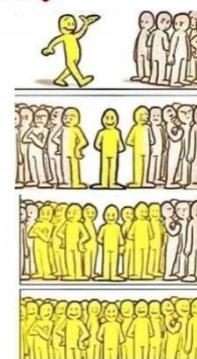
And finally...

Know that we are very proud to be part of your education journey and that your achievements really matter to us! Remember, whilst exam results are important, success is more than just a grade.

Thank you for allowing us to share your successes in this report and we look forward to sharing so many more over the coming year.

We wish you much success in your education this year and would remind you and those around you to reach out if you need us.

This is how your light changes the world. ❤️



Contacting the CLA & SiaSS Team...

Name	Title	Email	Telephone
Cherie Sears	Virtual School Head	Cherie.sears@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk	07710 153662
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Sarita Dhaliwal	Primary Education Champion	Sarita.dhaliwal@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk	07834 740463
Danielle Thornton	Secondary Lead	Danielle.thornton@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk	07787 697867
Kuldip Rayat-Jones	Secondary Education Champion	Kuldip.rayat-jones@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk	07500 106031
Reem Ali	16+ Education, Employment & Training Lead	Reem.ali@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk	07720 074451
Selmah Chaudhary	Education, Employment & Training Lead for Slough 16-18	Selmah.Chaudhary@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk	07808 647619
Harpal Keila	Post 16 EE&T Champion	Harpal.Keila@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk	07711 564136
Stephanie Burnett	Post 16 EE&T Champion	Stephanie.burnett@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk	07860 592914
Ewen Godfrey	SiaSS Lead	Ewen.godfrey@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk	07806 431710
Tina Coombe	SiaSS Champion	Tina.coombe@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk	07749 709890

Appendix A: Understanding Data

What is Progress 8?

Progress 8 is the accountability measure that determines students' progress across 8 subjects. This is a value added measure whereby students' results will be compared to students who had the same prior attainment score at KS2. The end results will be used to determine the success of secondary schools. What is

Attainment 8?

The Attainment 8 score is the average measure of an individual student's progress across their 8 best performing subjects which fall into three 'Attainment 8 buckets'; if these 8 best subjects do not fall into the three designated buckets for 'English & Maths', 'Ebacc' or 'Other' subjects, the score will not be counted.

What's the difference between Progress 8 and Attainment 8?

The Attainment 8 score measures the achievement of an individual student across their eight best performing subjects. The Progress 8 score measures how well they've progressed since their time in secondary school compared to their peers who were at the same level as them at key stage two. Collective student Progress 8 scores will be used to determine the success of whole secondary schools based on how much progress all students have made.

How do you calculate Attainment 8?

In order to calculate Attainment 8, the traditional GCSE grades are translated into numbers, where a grade 8 will represent the A/A* boundary, a 1 will represent a G and 4 will indicate a pass, the same as that of a C grade.. A 9 has been introduced to recognise truly outstanding work, fewer of these will be awarded than A*s have been historically.

New Conversion Table

New grading structure	Former grading structure
9	
8	A*
7	A
6	B
5	C
4	
3	D
2	E
1	F
	G
U	U

Appendix C: Early Years and Primary Results table:

Year/ Assessment	Number of CYP in cohort	Number of Reporting CYP (in care more than 1 year)	Number of exempted CYP	Number of “passes”	Number of Working Towards	So what?
Year 6 SATs	7	6	2 (although one chose to sit and both have EHCP)	Reading 4 Writing 1 Maths 2 SPAG 5	Reading 2 Writing 5 Maths 4 SPAG 1	<p>Out of the 7 children, 3 hold an EHCP.</p> <p>1 child was accessing education other than at school.</p> <p>1 child had moved to a placement further away and had an hours journey to school each day. As well as this in Yr4 when coming into care their attendance was below 50% and huge gaps in their learning were subsequently identified. Despite this they were at EXP for reading and SPAG and made significant progress in Maths and writing.</p> <p>In addition a further child was 2 marks away from AT in Reading and another only 3 marks away. A further child was only 1 mark away from AT in Maths.</p> <p>Between them there have been multiple social worker changes, placement moves and bereavement.</p>

Year/ Assessment	Number of CYP in cohort	Number of Reporting CYP (in care more than 1 year)	Number of exempted CYP	Number of “passes”	Number of Working Towards	So what?
Year 4 Times tables	13	11	4 (1xCME, non- reporting, 3x EHCP exemption s)	No threshold. 1x 9/25 (EHCP) 1x9/25 (non-reporting) 2x 25/25; 1x24/25; 4x11- 15		Child 24/25 is now at expected /greater depth and wants to sit 11+ (tuition now in place); One child no longer looked after (14/24); One child (11/25) working at ARE and having support.
Year 2 SATs	6	3	1x EHCP 1 school opted out (TA used) 1x CME	Reading 1 Writing 0 Maths 1	Reading 3 Writing 4 Maths 3	Opted out child in adoptive placement - now has tuition. One child (WTS in all) now has EP report in preparation for EHCNA. Non-reporting CME child has school place and EP consult towards EHCNA, 1 child was very new into care and also now has EP report towards EHCNA.
Year 2 Phonics (“re- sit” of Year 1)	1	1	1 (CME)	0	2	Reporting child increased score. Other child was new into care and scored 0 in Yr1 and again in Yr2

Year/ Assessment	Number of CYP in cohort	Number of Reporting CYP in cohort	Number of exempt CYP in cohort	Number of passes	Number working towards	So what?
Year 1 Phonics	8	6	2 (1xCME -non reporting 1x EHCP reporting)	3	3 (2 reportin g, 1 non- reportin g)	1 reporting child missed by 2 marks - continues to work just below ARE. However, focus is currently on SEMH. Has support for these (Nurture, THRIVE, ELSA currently). Both non- reporting children are in school and have EP reports in preparation for potential EHCNAs
Reception EYFS GLD	5	5	0	3	2	One child has an EHCP and is now in special provision. Our 2nd child has made good progress since entering Year 1. Latest PEP judged to be at ARE in Reading and Maths, WTS for writing - monitoring - and has some interventions to support learning.

Appendix D: Useful links to DfE information about our statutory responsibilities

Virtual School

[Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

New responsibilities – Children with a Social Worker

[£16 million to support young people with a social worker - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Virtual school head role extension to children with a social worker - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Post 16 Education, Employment & Training

[September Guarantee: education and training for young people - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Glossary

PEP	Personal Education Plan	A PEP (Personal Education Plan) is a document that sets down information about your education, your progress and targets to support your continued learning. There is also personal details that allow us to reflect on wider support that you may have in relation to your care status and of course, most importantly, your voice.
EHCP	Education, Health & Care Plan	An Education Health and Care Plan is a document that sets out what is needed to ensure you are as successful as you can possibly be in your education. It is formulated when you require extra support beyond what the school may be able to provide and it is regularly reviewed to ensure that you are able to access the learning environment and perhaps equipment that is right for you.
SMART Targets	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely Target	A SMART Target is one that everyone involved have had the opportunity to reflect on and ensure is 'fit for the purpose', especially you. The word SMART is an acronym for Specific (it needs to be clear to everyone), Achievable (you need to be able to have a reasonable chance of achieving the hoped outcome), Relevant (it must meet your needs or requirements and not be too general), Timely (not without timelines to ensure that it is reviewed regularly).
P8 or Progress 8	Progress 8	Progress 8 is the accountability measure that determines your progress across 8 subjects. This is a value added measure whereby your results will be compared to students who had the same prior attainment score at KS2.
A8 or Attainment 8	Attainment 8	The Attainment 8 score is the average measure of your progress across their 8 best performing subjects
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children	UASC are children who are outside their country of origin to seek asylum in the United Kingdom. They have been separated from parents and relatives, and are not in the care of someone who is responsible for doing so.
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training	This acronym refers to a group of young people who are currently without education, employment or training to occupy them.
Not Known	'Not Known'	This refers to young people who we are unable to make contact with at present to establish whether they have education, employment or training.
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health	This acronym refers to an additional need for a person based around Social, Emotional and/or Mental Health challenges
Advocacy	Advocacy	Advocacy means getting support from another person to help you express your views and wishes, and help you stand up for your rights. Someone who helps you in this way is called your advocate.
ELSA	Emotional Literacy Support Assistant	Someone to support you to understand your feelings and express them confidently in the presence of others.
FAP	Fair Access Protocol	Fair Access Protocol (FAP) is a mechanism developed by the Local Authority in partnership with all schools in its area. The aim is to ensure that vulnerable children, and those who are having difficulty in securing a school place in-year, are allocated a school place as quickly as possible.
Reportable Cohort	Reportable Cohort	The 'Reportable Cohort is a group of young people who we report on because they form part of a certain criteria such as age, identifying features or perhaps year group.