



OUR VIRTUAL SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

Working in partnership, in Tameside, to support care-experienced children and young people

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Tameside Virtual School Annual Report, Academic Year 2021-2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There have been significant changes within the Virtual School and College team to enable a proactive service for cared for children and children with a social worker. Further details of this work is detailed within the report but operationally this has been facilitated by a redesign and recruitment process which is now complete. As Head teacher of Tameside Virtual School I am excited to lead this new and highly skilled team into the next phase of our expanding service and secure positive outcomes for vulnerable children within education collaboratively with our schools, social care colleagues, foster carers, youth justice service, and most importantly alongside our young people themselves.

It's a privilege to lead this work and I am delighted to report on some significant improvements during Academic Year 2021-2022 as well as the planning for 2022-2023.

IMPACT of Virtual School and College 2021-22

- An increase in 4+ and 5+ English and Maths GCSE results for 2022 cohort in comparison to 2019
- Increase of cared for children having SEND identified and EHCPs awarded
- Persistently high level of PEPs completed and returned termly (around 98%)
- Increased numbers attending further and higher education
- Total of 3361 hours school led grant tuition completed
- Wider coverage of children's services giving advice to social workers and schools supporting children in need and preventing permanent exclusions of vulnerable children through the intervention of our service

Priorities for 2022 – 2023

- Reduction of suspensions
- Attendance
- Earlier identification of SEND needs
- Establishing the new training programme
- Post 16 EET engagement

Virtual School and College Team

Head Teacher	Amanda Aylward
Managers	Kath Hankinson Rachael Weeden
Education Welfare Officer	Rosie Spiers
Education Welfare Officer	Jack Andrews
Education Welfare Officer	Molly Marsden
Education Welfare Officer	Sue Toke
Post 16 Learning Advisor	Kelly Taylor
Finance and Information Officer	Helen O'Connor





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The Virtual School and College has undertaken a redesign and increased in capacity over the last twelve months. The new structure includes two new manager roles and an increase in the number of Education Welfare Officers. This expansion allows us to deliver our service priorities more efficiently and increase our impact on the outcomes of cared for children and children with a social worker. The Virtual School Head teacher reports directly to the Director of Education and is part of the wider children’s leadership team as well as part of the education management team.

The Virtual School and College has also developed a close working relationship with Stockport Virtual School, with the Head Teacher taking on the role of interim Head Teacher at Stockport Virtual School. This has led to increased partnership working, sharing of resources and collaboration on training initiatives.

Moving Forward:

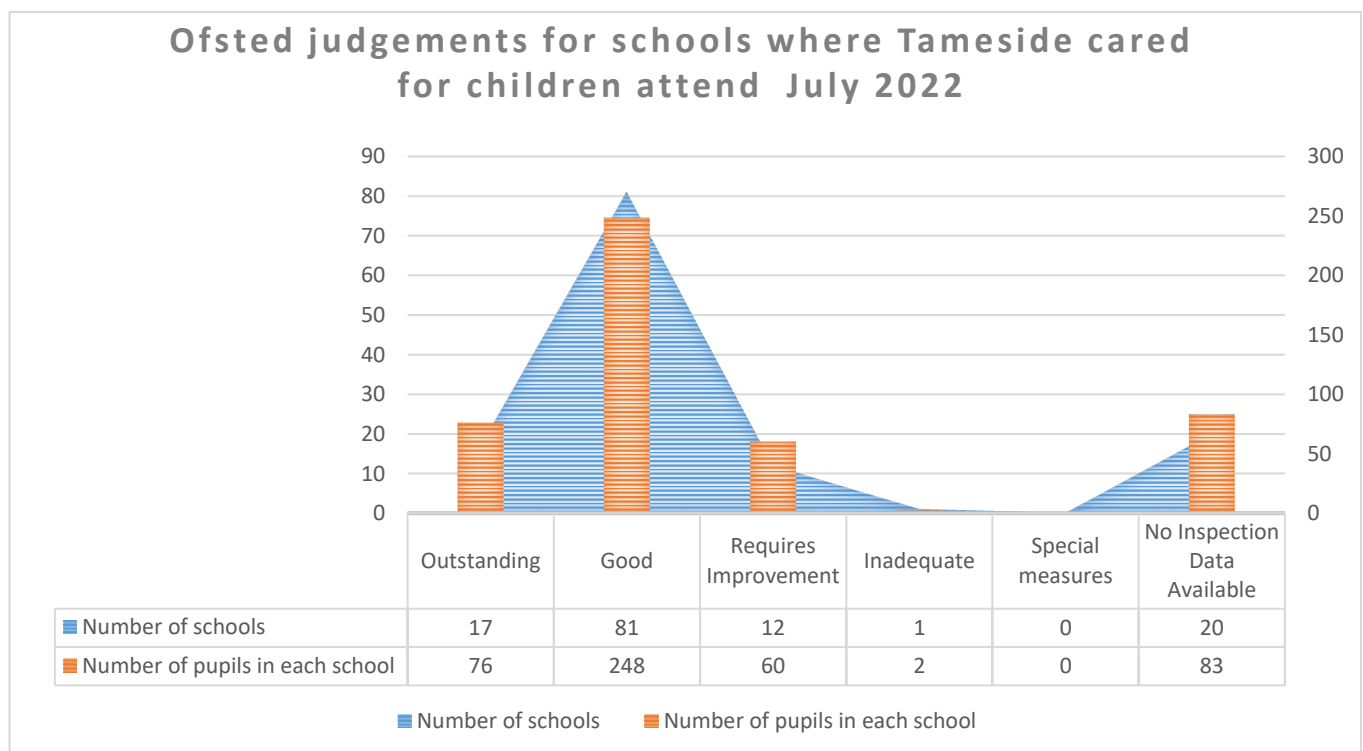
All existing and new Virtual School staff are to be encouraged to be on governing bodies in Tameside schools alongside personal CPD training around specific areas such as attendance and SEND legislation which will be cascaded throughout the team.

“I want to be a writer and make my own poems. Maybe make my own script for a play. I'm interested in going to drama school” Year 10 – Samuel Laycock School

2021-22 - School Information Data:

The following data is taken from a snapshot of a day in July 2022. This data may appear differently in DfE publications as this is based on a day in time and represents children who have been in care for more than 12 months. Data is taken from Looked After Call and LCS, it is reliable but un-validated.

Schools OFSTED ratings





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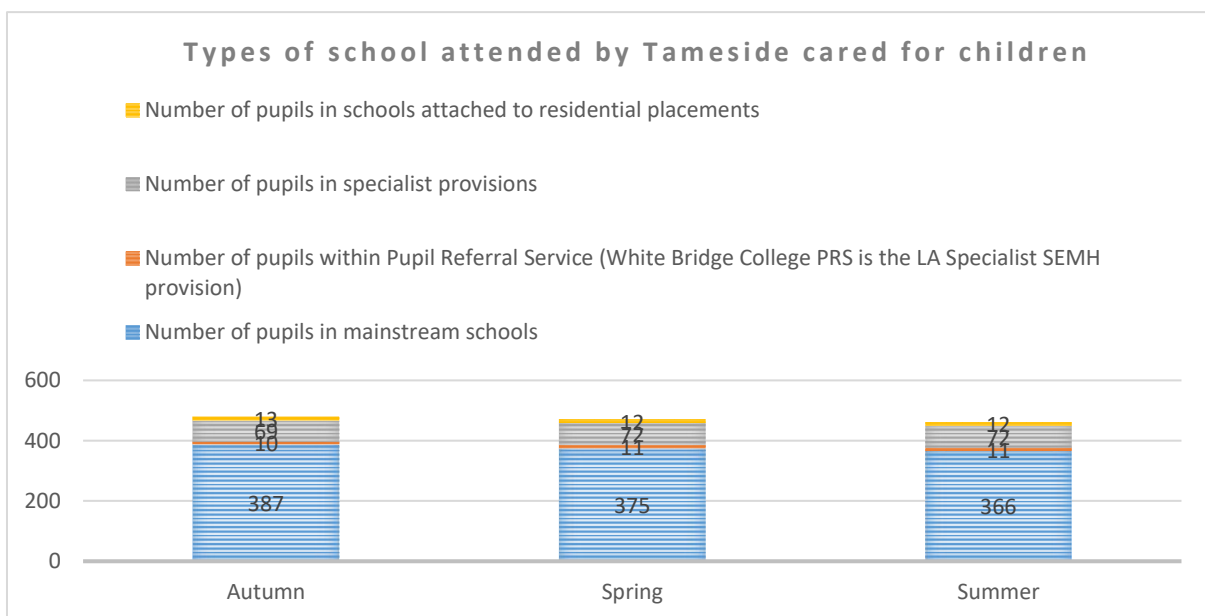
The chart above shows the Ofsted ratings of schools Tameside cared for children attend (both in and out of Tameside). It clearly demonstrates that the vast majority of Tameside cared for children attend schools which are either Good or Outstanding. Where schools have an RI or lower judgment Virtual School team attend PEPs, ensure that it is still an appropriate provision and support school to support the child attending.

Moving forward:

We continue to ensure any movement of school is discouraged unless absolutely necessary and ensure that school location is considered in care planning with social workers prior to any move being agreed.

Types of School

As of July 2022 we had 459 cared for children in Reception to Year 11. The chart below shows the distribution of cared for children from Reception to Year 11 by establishment type in each term. The number of children in each establishment type has remained broadly stable over the three terms.



Moving Forward:

All children in residential care provisions are treated as a distinct cohort within Virtual School and their attendance and progress monitored as a distinct group.



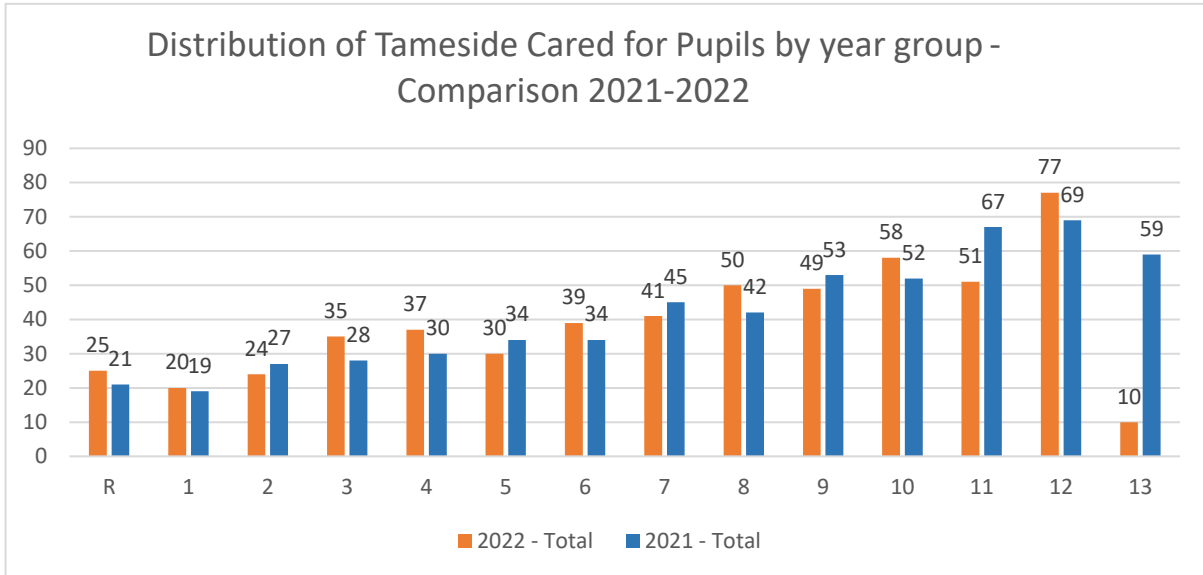
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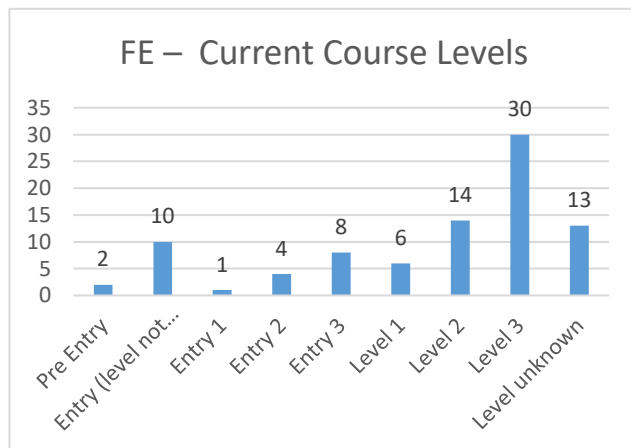
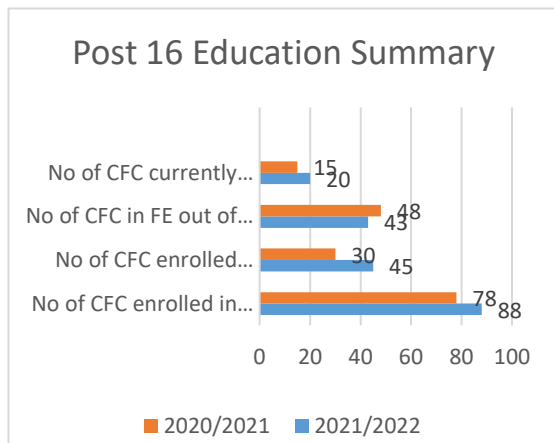
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Pupil Numbers by year group

As of July 2022 - Tameside has 546 cared for children Reception to Year 13. It is important to note that the 2022, Year 13 figure does not include Year 13 students aged 18+.



Pupils in Further and Higher Education

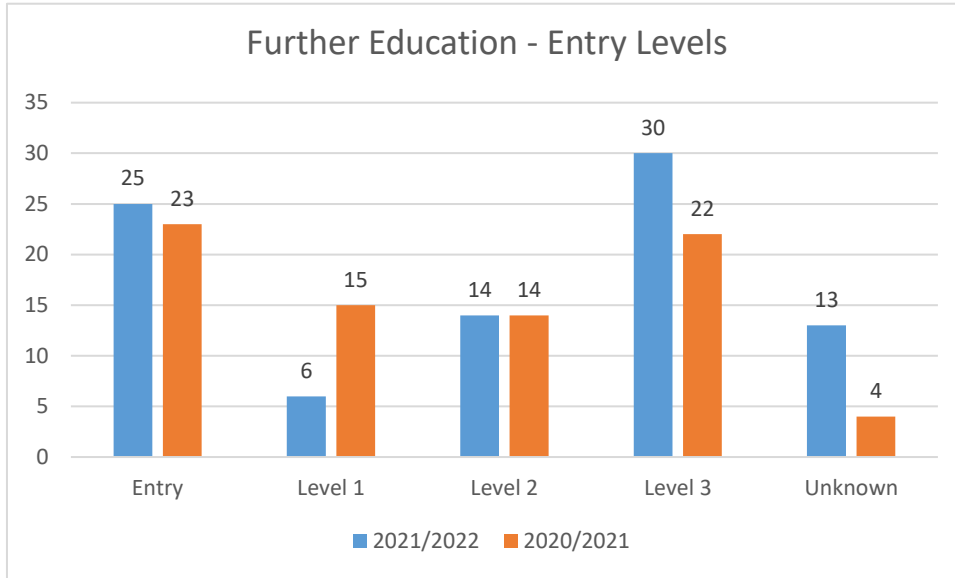




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This academic year we are delighted to have cared experienced Tameside young people at new (to us) Universities including Leeds Becket, University of Westminster and University of York.

We have been working closely with our colleagues in Economy, Employment and Skills directorate and established a young person's hub and the YES programme. Both schemes with the direct intention of offering opportunities and support into EET have been successful for many individuals finding and sustaining work. A separate paper is reporting on this work with a full evaluation of EET for our post 16 cohort.

Moving forward:

Continued partnership work with Tameside College (a Virtual School worker is based within the college). Collaborative work with the "House Project" and cross directorate working with employment and skills team within Tameside Council.

"I would like to be a scientist and do experiments" – Year 1 – St Joseph's RC Primary School



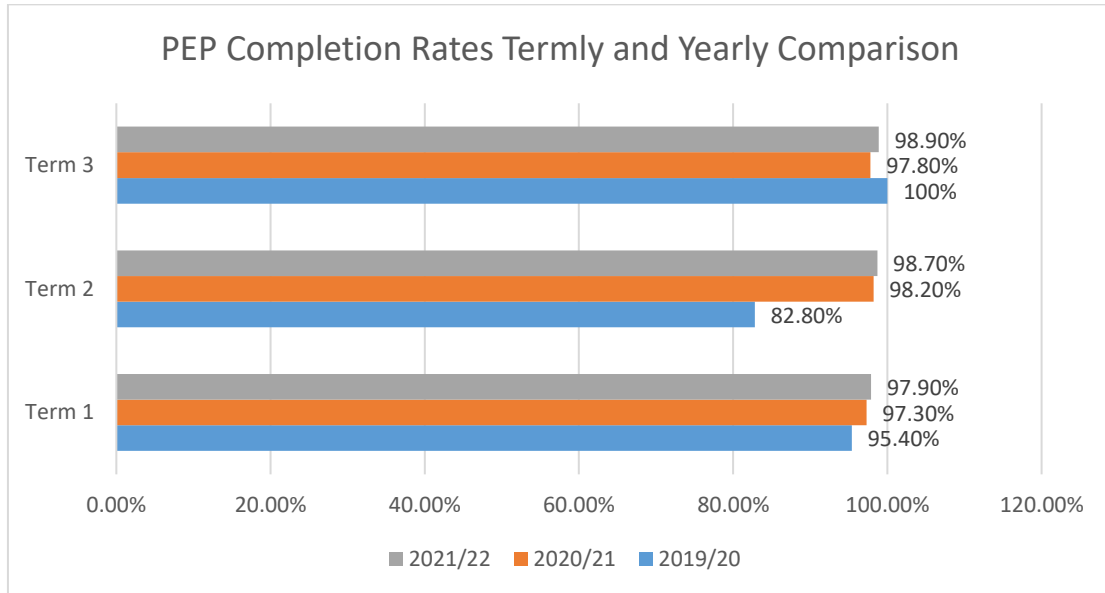
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2021-2022 PEP Information

We have a consistently high termly return of PEP documents. PEP meetings are held regularly and the paperwork is returned appropriately demonstrating pupil premium spending.



Moving Forward:

We strive to improve the quality of information and consistency of quality of PEPs. We work with designated teachers to offer advice around PEP completion including targets and appropriate monitoring of progress; we have published tutorials on our website around how to complete PEPs as well as offering individual meetings with designated teachers.

“Everything is good. I like handwriting best because it is fun and I also like quick maths. I maybe want to be a professional horse rider” Year 3 – Flowery Field Primary School



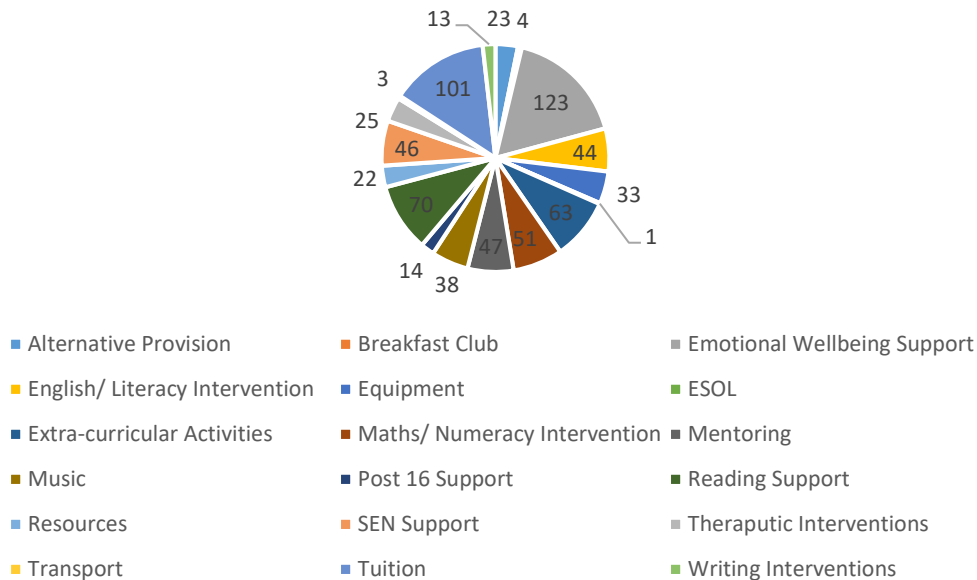
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Pupil Premium plus Spending

Summary of use of Pupil Premium Plus Grant



Moving Forward

All uses of pupil premium are quality assured and validated by ourselves in Virtual School before releasing funds. We will continue to monitor the impact of all interventions and challenge appropriately where necessary if not thought to be of the greatest value to our young people.

School Led Tutoring Grant

Tameside Virtual School and College have been able to utilise the School Led Tutoring Grant (which is part of the National Tutoring Programme) to provide tutoring intervention to support catch-up for lost education due to the pandemic, for Tameside cared for children. Tuition was sourced by schools directly and also by Tameside Virtual School through a tuition partner agency. 1:1 and group tuition was provided in a range of subjects to help pupils catch-up with their lost learning. Use of the School Led Tutoring Grant was demonstrated in the termly PEPs of cared for children, which are quality assured by managers in the Virtual School.

	Total No of cared for pupils (Mainstream)	Total No of cared for pupils (Specialist)	Total No of cared for pupils		Total No of Hours (Mainstream)	Total No of Hours (Specialist)	Total No of Hours
Autumn	63	3	66		816	57	873
Spring	66	3	69		1099	47	1146
Summer	72	2	74		1194	44	1238
Summer Holiday Programme	2	1	3		24	80	104
				Total Hours	3133	228	3361





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"I would like to be either a dancer, show-jumper or a lawyer" Year 7 – Hyde High School

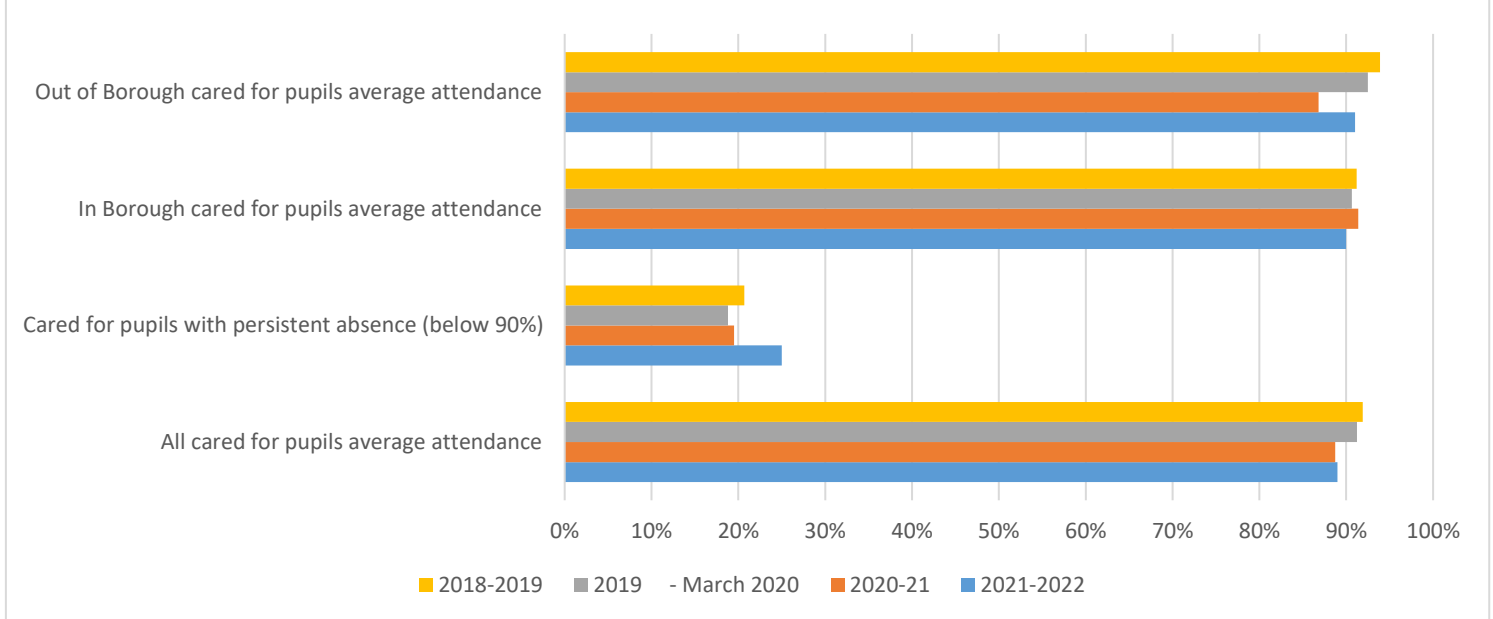
2021-22 – Cared for Children Attendance

The charts below summarise the attendance of Tameside cared for children with both termly and yearly comparisons. Termly attendance comparisons are broadly similar, however average attendance continues to be marginally below pre Covid levels and there has been an increase in persistent absenteeism. Attendance at specialist provisions is also lower than at mainstream.

Moving forward:

Attendance continues to be a key focus area and, with the greater capacity created in our restructure we will continue to work with schools and social care services proactively to address attendance worries at the earliest stage possible.

Cared for Children Attendance - Year on Year Comparison



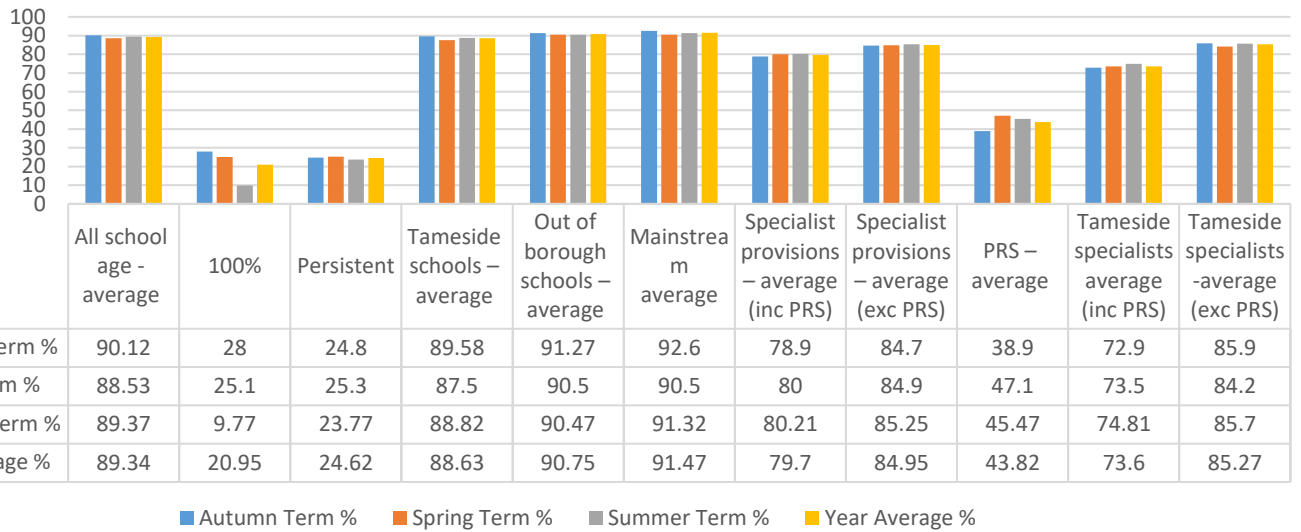


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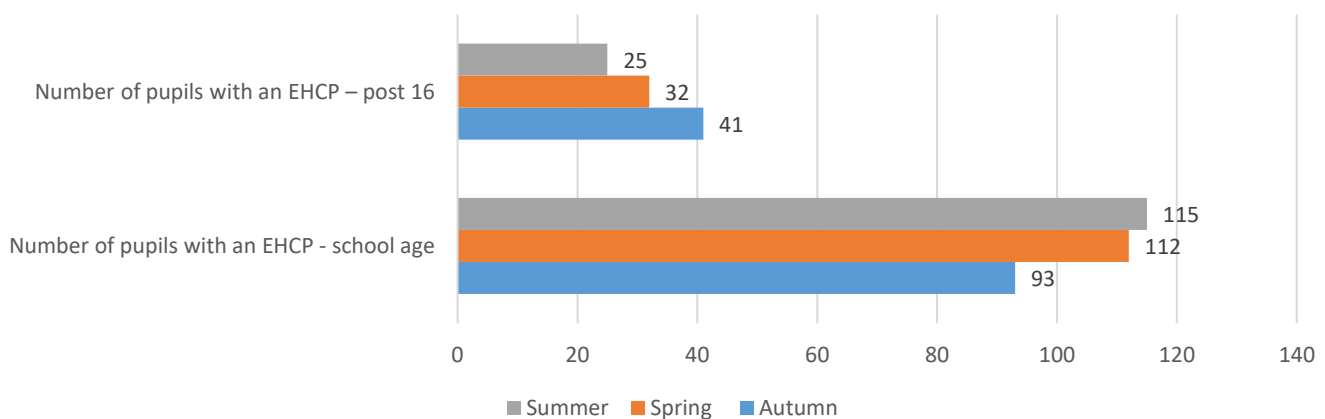
2021-2022 - Cared for Children Attendance Analysis Term by Term



2021-22 – Cared for Children SEND Information

As the charts below demonstrate, the number of cared for children being issued with an EHCP continues to increase. The primary area of need for cared for children with an EHCP also continues to be social, emotional and mental health. Although there has been a drop in the number of pupils with this identified need from last year, it has significantly increased since 2019. This is likely due to improved identification of need and our close working relationship with the SEND team allowing us to ensure cared for children’s needs are rapidly and accurately identified.

Cared for Children with EHCP by School Phase - Termly Comparison - 2021-22





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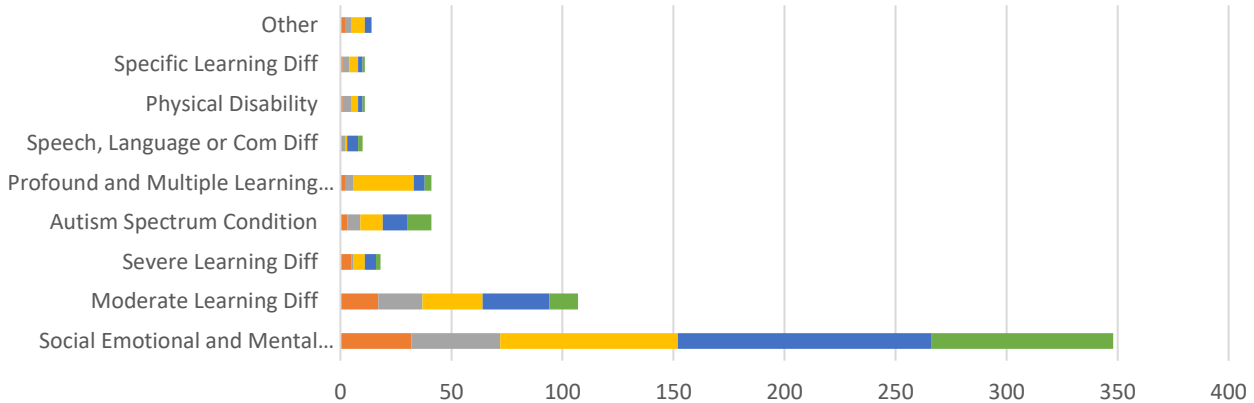
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The Identified Primary Need of Cared for Children with an EHCP August 2022

- Autistic Spectrum Condition
- Moderate Learning Difficulty
- Physical Disability
- Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty
- Severe Learning Difficulty
- Social Emotional & Mental Hlth
- Speech,Lang or Comm Difficulty
- Specific Learning Difficulty



Year on Year Comparison of SEND Category of Need



	Social Emotional and Mental Health	Moderate Learning Diff	Severe Learning Diff	Autism Spectrum Condition	Profound and Multiple Learning Diff	Speech, Language or Com Diff	Physical Disability	Specific Learning Diff	Other
2017-2018	32	17	5	3	2		1	1	2
2018-2019	40	20	1	6	4	2	4	3	3
2019-2020	80	27	5	10	27	1	3	4	6
2020-21	114	30	5	11	5	5	2	2	3
2021-22	82	13	2	11	3	2	1	1	0



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Moving forward:

We will continue to work collaboratively with SEND colleagues both within the Local Authority and within schools to ensure cared for children's needs are identified rapidly are being met effectively.

2021-2022 – KS2 Data

The table below outlines the attainment data for Tameside cared for children in KS2 2021-22, compared to national figures. The data relates to children who had been in care for more than 12 months. This data has been taken from NCER NEXUS and has the following category descriptors.

<Exp: Scaled score lower than 100 in tested subjects and performance category lower than EXS in Writing TA / Exp+: Scaled score of 100 or higher in tested subjects and performance category of EXS or GDS in Writing TA / High: Scaled score at or above higher threshold in tested subjects and performance category of GDS in Writing TA

	Reading Tameside	Reading National	Writing (TA*) Tameside	Writing (TA*) National	Maths Tameside	Maths National	GPS* Tameside	GPS* National
Less than expected (<EXP)	51.6%	46%	/	/	54.8%	53%	51.6%	51%
Expected or higher (EXP+)	48.4%	52%	35.5%	43%	45.2%	45%	48.4%	48%
High	12.9%	13%	/	/	6.5%	7%	6.5%	11%

- TA = Teacher assessment
- GPS = Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling



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2021-2022 -GCSE Attainment

	2022 12 month +		2021 12 months +	2019 Results (last formal exam series)
	Number	%	%	%
Number of year 11s cared for 12 months +	48		60 young people in care	
At least 1 grade 1-9	28	58.3	63.3	
at least 1 grade 4+	26	54.2	48	
at least 1 grade 5+	12	25	33	
Grade 4+ Eng. or Maths	18	37.5	50	22
Grade 4+ Eng. & Maths	10	20.8	30	18
Grade 5+ Eng. or Maths	9	18.8		12
Grade 5+ Eng. & Maths	4	8.3		8
1 or more grade 6+	6	12.5	16.7	
1 or more grade 7+	1	2.1	6.7	
EHCP	22	45.8	35	
Number not entered for GCSE exams	17	35.4	35	

These figures show an increase in the 4+ and 5+ English & Maths and English/ Maths measure for 2022 when compared to the last year that formal exams were sat.

These figures show an increase in the number of grade 4's achieved between 2022 and 2021.

This shows the significant increase in the number of cared for children with EHCPs.

In addition to the achievements of our whole cohort of young people it is also important to recognise that some of our cared for children achieved excellent individual results, despite facing difficult personal circumstances. For example, one young person achieved 6 grade 4s, including maths and a grade 5 in English. Another young person achieved 4 grade 7s, 3 grade 5s and 2 grade 4s. This includes grade 5+ in English and Maths. Two young people achieved 5 grade 5s, both also achieved at least a grade 4 in English and Maths. Regardless of the levels of qualifications achieved by our young people, we are proud of their efforts and wish them every success in their post



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16 endeavours.

“When I grow up I want to be a post-man because I like saying hi to everyone in the morning. I love Maths and like doing time with the clock. I like doing geography and looking at Maths I think being able to read a map will help me when I am a post man” Longford Park School

2021-22 – continued response to COVID

The impact of Covid and the pandemic has not gone away and our response to the lost learning and isolation during the period of Covid has not halted.

During the pandemic, many cared for children still attended schools when they were smaller and quieter environments. Since the full return of all children to schools this has unfortunately impacted negatively on some of our young people as they are understandably struggling to reconnect and share their time and space with much bigger cohorts. This has been reflected in attendance and suspensions and is something we are monitoring closely to offer swift support in partnership with schools and carers.

Tuition has been a big part of recovering lost learning for our young people and we have continued to offer this into further education where requested. Full breakdown of school led tutoring has been detailed previously in this report.

Moving Forward

We are mindful that the impact of Covid will be with us for years to come and we will continue to be responsive to any emerging needs such as school readiness, speech and language development and anxieties around school attendance.

What is going well at school? “Reading - still! Fiction books are my favourite” –Year 5 - Endeavour Academy

Collaborative Working

Tameside Virtual School and College believe the key to successful outcomes for cared for children is to work collaboratively with all agencies involved in their lives to encourage a seamless and cohesive approach. We also embrace regional and national partnerships to ensure our practice is fully informed and relevant to local and national situations.

Summary of partnership working across agencies within Tameside and National organisations is:

- VSH Youth Justice Board, Tameside and Stockport
- VSH education representative in DV Strategy Group
- VS representation on SEN assessment panel
- VSH PRS Governor
- VS representation as a Tameside Primary School Governor



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- VS representation at social care placement tracking panel, legal gateway, permanence and residential panels
- VSH member of NAVSH
- VSH active member of North West Virtual Head network
- VSH member of Education Management Team and Children's Wider Leadership Team
- VSH member of Tameside Association Secondary Heads
- Provide induction training for all social care new starters

Training

A priority for this academic year was to create and implement a more comprehensive training programme. The programme consists of:

- Half termly bulletins to social carers, foster carers and schools with similar focuses but different approaches (follow the link in the picture below for an example)
- Training delivered to individual social work teams
- Designated teacher training
- School Governor training
- Foster carer training

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Tameside Virtual School Bulletin for Parents & Carers – Autumn Half Term 2022

Attendance
As a parent or carer, it is important to understand how your child's attendance can impact on their attainment, progress and outcomes.
So how much learning time does your child miss out on?
➢ If your child has 100% attendance, it means they are attending every day – fantastic!
➢ 90% attendance – this actually equates to missing around 4 weeks of school per year
➢ If they have 80% attendance, this results in them missing more than half a term each year – very worrying!
➢ 70% attendance = more than a quarter of the school year missed – shocking when you think of the amount of lessons they will have missed in this time!
➢ Lateness – if your child is 5 minutes late every day, they will miss three days of learning each year. If your child is 15 minutes late every day, they will miss 2 weeks of learning each year

School Admissions: It's time to start applying!
➢ If you haven't done so already, you must start applying for a school placement if your child is reaching a key transition phase (reception, secondary school or college)
➢ Start visiting the different schools' open days to help you ensure it is the right school setting for your child
Key dates:
○ The closing date for submitting a Year 7 2023 school application is 31 October 2022.
○ The closing date for submitting a Reception 2023 school application is 15 January 2023.
➢ If your child has an EHCP, an SEN caseworker will support in ensuring a school, which can meet your child's needs is identified. This will take place via the annual review process
➢ Starting a new school is an important time for children and young people and all school moves should be considered very carefully. We understand that at times school transfers are necessary, however, we do encourage you to avoid this if possible

PEP Guidance
➢ Although schools and social workers are responsible for completing a PEP meeting each term for your child, to discuss their educational needs, it is essential for parents or carers to be part of this meeting
➢ If you have not been invited to attend a PEP meeting, ensure you contact the social worker or designated teacher to request an invite
➢ You will have a good understanding of the child and may be able to offer more information as to how they are feeling surrounding their education and learning
➢ You should also encourage the young person to attend the meeting as well, if they feel comfortable
➢ Pupil voice and contribution throughout the meeting is an important aspect to a termly PEP to make sure the child's views are accurately reflected

Please contact us if you require any further support or guidance...
Telephone: 0161 342 4057
Email: admin.virtualschool@tameside.gov.uk

Produced in collaboration with Stockport Virtual School

Our website was also a priority for improvement and we have achieved this by making it a conduit for all professionals, carers and children including videos of our PEP training, links to useful networks and partners and celebrating success of our young people.

www.tameside.gov.uk/tamesidevirtualschool



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Moving Forward

We will continue to update and improve our website, take feedback from our training and respond to emerging needs.

"I would eventually would like to own my own business in the construction industry and there may be a chance of a level 2 apprenticeship with a family friend"- Year 12 – Tameside College

Extended Duties of Virtual School and College

Statutory duties for cared for children remain the same and Virtual School and College team are now offering advice and monitoring attendance and outcomes for all children with a social worker. As part of these extended duties we have continued to work collaboratively with our Youth Justice Service and Pupil Referral Service as key vulnerable groups.

There have been many contacts asking for advice and clarifications into the team which have been dealt with swiftly due to the expanded structure of the team. There have also been some specific examples where children who were struggling at school due to their home circumstances received additional support via the Virtual School and this earlier intervention supported an EHCP assessment process and prevented exclusions and potential breakdown of family life. These were all examples of schools or social workers contacting us for support and the outcomes in each case were very successful and prevented further disruption and trauma.

Case study:

Virtual school and college were contacted by the social worker of a KS1 child who was at risk of permanent exclusion. School had identified SEN needs and statutory assessment was underway. Virtual school have been able to support and prevent a permanent exclusion by providing advice and support to allow the pupil to access a bespoke curriculum until the outcome of his statutory assessment. An EHCP has since been awarded and the student has been placed at a setting which is more able to meet his needs.

Moving Forward

We will continue to develop our work with social care and youth justice teams ensuring schools are aware of our extended duties with the intention of these services contacting Virtual School as a proactive way of working as opposed to when a situation has escalated.

Assertive Mentoring Scheme

Review of Assertive Mentoring pilot (academic year 2021-22)

What we did:

A cohort of 11 Tameside cared for children were selected and matched to a mentor who was a manager in the education or workforce development section of the council or member of SLT. The aim was to improve the GCSE results and educational opportunities for this specific cohort via assertive mentoring.

The mentor was to support each young person by making contact with them regularly to specifically understand how their progress towards their GCSE examinations was going. They were to support, as a





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parent, by ensuring the young person had a suitable revision timetable (and were following it), ensure they have appropriate revision guides, check their laptop and internet access were fully functional, offer revision techniques, organisational advice and offer motivational, as well as practical, support.

With their mentee's permission, they contacted their school to ascertain their predicted grades and enquired as to what additional support may have been needed to gain these results. The mentee and mentor worked over a specific period of time in the approach to GCSE examinations. Any barriers identified that needed to be could be passed to Virtual School who would resolve swiftly. Any additional resources identified to be needed could be requested via school or Virtual School and implemented swiftly.

This mentoring scheme was **IN ADDITION** to all work undertaken by the pupil themselves, school, carers and social worker and its focus was around the assistance needed to achieve the GCSE results our mentees had the potential to gain.

All mentors were given training from Educational Psychologist Hannah Hulme.

Feedback from young people

Appreciative of the WhatsApp messages on exam days and she said they helped her feel calmer and gave her some positive thoughts before going into the exams.

Feedback from Mentors

It was lovely to see her today, she was so positive and genuinely excited for her next step and I have thoroughly enjoyed the project. I intend to drop her the odd WhatsApp just to keep in touch.

I think this is a brilliant scheme and something that we should do every year.

It feels like I probably helped keep things on track when they looked like they might spin off the rails a bit.

I'll be keeping in touch with A to try and keep her going in the right direction at college.

I'm still sad my mentee didn't want me but it's great to hear that others engaged!

Feedback from Head teachers and Schools

I can't comment on the direct impact on the mentoring, but I would say that having some attention from a professional outside of school is a real confidence booster for these students. Although it was a little overwhelming and perhaps a little intimidating at first, I know that the student really engaged well after her initial worries and went on to be very successful.

I think it's a great idea and I found it supports them with the idea with leaving school and the support outside.

Feedback from Virtual School Head teacher:

We have received some good individual results for some of our young people. Each experience was different dependent on the young person's needs and that seems entirely appropriate. Some positive outcomes were:

One young person - whose attendance was 61%, suffered anxiety and is a cared for child - gained **Eng. Lang 6, Eng. Lit 6, Maths 5, Science 6,5, Business 6, RS 5, History 4**. Their English target grade was 4 and Maths 5 so they significantly exceeded her English targets despite, in January, working at English 3 and Maths 4.





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Their mentor ensured they had all appropriate revision guides, gave tips on managing anxiety, met for a coffee, and messaged on the morning of every single exam. The mentor was in contact on results day and they have since celebrated via a coffee and intend to keep in touch.

A young person - who has an EHCP and autism diagnosis - gained the following results **Eng. Lang - 6, Lit - 5, Maths 5, Music P2, Performing Arts, M2, Comb Science - 5,4, French 6, Hist 6**. This young person was a reluctant mentee, however, engaged over the phone and had their views listened to and will have felt invested in alongside having a regular opportunity to express any concerns.

Another young person who suffered repeated rejections and suffering stress, further exacerbating their confidence and self-esteem, was on a downward trajectory in Year 11. Their mentor supported and calmed down any arising conflicts, kept them on track, ensured they were prepared to sit the exams and they gained **English lang 4, Lit 3, Maths 4, RE 2, Spanish 3, Science 4,3**. They have since enrolled at college, despite an initial refusal and their mentor took them.

A colleague in the Employment and Skills team emailed on results day morning to say his mentee had “nailed” his results! **English Lang 3 English Lit 4, French 4, History 5, Maths 5 RE 3, Sports P2, science 5, 5**. Also, being in this sector he had made sure he knew exactly where he was transitioning to and he was enrolling on results day afternoon at Ashton Sixth Form College to do Public Services.

In conclusion, there is no one way or one benefit to the mentoring but I think it has been successful in many different ways, some unintentional. Some young people didn't want to engage with a mentor and that is their choice, it can be left open if they change their minds. We could also, in these situations, look at how we could still support the young person by seeing if they would agree to a “check-in” phone call once a month until the exam season is over and develop from this.

I think this is corporate parenting at its finest and, from conversations with mentors, it appears that they have also gained enormous pleasure from the experience and gained an insight into schools from the most important view point, our young people.

Moving Forward:

A more detailed analysis was presented to Education Management Team and it was determined a successful scheme which we will operate again next academic year, starting at an earlier point.

“I am good at times tables although maths can sometimes be tricky, if it is I would just try my best or ask the teacher for help” - Year 4 - Lyndhurst Community Primary School

