



Leicester
City Council

MEETING OF THE CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMISSION

DATE: TUESDAY, 26 MARCH 2024

TIME: 5:30 pm

**PLACE: Meeting Room G.01, Ground Floor, City Hall, 115 Charles
Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ**

Members of the Commission

Councillor Batool (Chair)

Councillor Cole (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Barnes, Haq, Joshi, Dr Moore, Pantling and Pickering

Co-opted Members (Voting)

Standing Invitees (Non-Voting)

Youth Representatives

Jennifer Day

Janet McKenna

Teaching Unions representative

UNISON Branch Secretary

Members of the Commission are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed overleaf.

For the Monitoring Officer

Officer contacts:

Ed Brown (Senior Governance Officer)

Katie Jordan (Governance Support Officer),

Tel: 0116 454 6350, e-mail: committees@leicester.gov.uk

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Further information

If you have any queries about any of the above or the business to be discussed, please contact:

Katie Jordan, Democratic Support Officer on 0116 454 6350.

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USEFUL ACRONYMS IN RELATION TO OFSTED AND EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

(updated November 2015)

Acronym	Meaning
APS	Average Point Score: the average attainment of a group of pupils; points are assigned to levels or grades attained on tests.
ASYE	Assessed and Supported Year in Employment
C&YP	Children and Young People
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CFST	Children and Families Support Team
CICC	Children in Care Council
CIN	Children in Need
CLA	Children Looked After
CLASS	City of Leicester Association of Special Schools
COLGA	City of Leicester Governors Association
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CQC	Care Quality Commission
CYPF	Children Young People and Families Division (Leicester City Council)
CYPP	Children and Young People's Plan
CYPS Scrutiny	Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission
DAS	Duty and Advice Service
DCS	Director of Children's Services
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EET	Education, Employment and Training
EHA	Early Help Assessment
EHCP	Education Health and Care Plan
EHP	Early Help Partnership
EHSS	Early Help Stay Safe
EIP	Education Improvement Partnership

ELG	Early Learning Goals: aspects measured at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile
EY	Early Years
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage: (0-5); assessed at age 5.
EYFSP	Early Years Foundation Stage Profile
ESFA	Education Skills and Funding Agency
FS	Foundation Stage: nursery and school Reception, ages 3-5; at start of Reception a child is assessed against the new national standard of 'expected' stage of development, then teacher assessment of Foundation Stage Profile areas of learning
FSM	Free School Meals
GCSE	General Certificate of Education
GLD	Good Level of Development
HMCI	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
IRO	Independent Reviewing Officer
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
KS1	Key Stage 1: National Curriculum Years (NCYs) 1 and 2, ages 5-7; assessed at age 7.
KS2	Key Stage 2: NCYs 3, 4, 5, and 6, ages 7-11; assessed at age 11.
KS3	Key Stage 3: NCYs 7, 8 and 9, ages 11-14; no statutory assessment.
KS4	Key Stage 4: NCYs 10 and 11, ages 14-16; assessed at age 16.
KTC	Knowledge Transfer Centre
LA	Local Authority
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer
LARP	Leicester Access to Resources Panel
LCCIB	Leicester City Council Improvement Board
LCT	Leicester Children's Trust
LDD	Learning Difficulty or Disability
LESP	Leicester Education Strategic Partnership
LLEs	Local Leaders of Education

LP	Leicester Partnership
LPP	Leicester Primary Partnership
LPS	Leicester Partnership School
LSCB	Leicester Safeguarding Children Board
LSOAs	Lower Super Output Areas
MACFA	Multi Agency Case File Audit
NCY	National Curriculum Year
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NLEs	National Leaders of Education
NLGs	National Leaders of Governance
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PEPs	Personal Education Plans
PI	Performance Indicator
PVI	Private, Voluntary and Independent
QA	Quality Assurance
RAP	Resource Allocation Panel
RI	Requires Improvement
SA	Single Assessment
SALT	Speech and Language Therapy
SCR	Serious Case Review
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SIMS	Schools Information Management Systems
SLCN	Speech, Language and Communication Needs
SLEs	Specialist Leaders of Education
SMT	Senior Management Team
SRE	Sex and Relationship Education
TBC	To be Confirmed
TFL	Tertiary Federation Leicester
TP	Teenage Pregnancy
UHL	University Hospitals Leicester
WIT	Whatever it Takes

YOS	Youth Offending Service
YPC	Young People's Council

PUBLIC SESSION

AGENDA

FIRE / EMERGENCY EVACUATION

If the emergency alarm sounds, you must evacuate the building immediately by the nearest available fire exit and proceed to the area outside the Ramada Encore Hotel on Charles Street as directed by Democratic Services staff. Further instructions will then be given.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare any interests they may have in the business to be discussed.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

**Appendix A
(Pages 1 - 10)**

The minutes of the meeting of the Children, Young People, and Education Scrutiny Commission held on 16th January 2024 are attached and Members are asked to confirm them as a correct record.

4. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

5. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer to report on the receipt of any petitions received in accordance with Council procedures.

6. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS, AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer to report on any questions, representations, or statements of case received.

The Monitoring Officer to report on the receipt of any questions, representations or statements of case received in accordance with Council procedures.

Simon Thorpe to ask:

“How have 'exceptional circumstances' been decided, with regards to whether

a 16+ young person with SEND is entitled to their EHCP specified transport, where is the visibility of this policy and the criteria that are 'exceptional circumstances'?

How have those young peoples' EHCPs where transport was or is now subsequently recorded as an 'exceptional circumstance' become as such? How is their 'exceptional circumstance' evidenced within the EHCP, under what section and via what instructions and by whom?

What is required in a young person's EHCP to evidence their transport need as an 'exceptional circumstance' and how is this need evidenced within the EHCP plan?

Under what criteria have some young people with physical, mental or social health need been offered either transport with a taxi or a personal transport budget, as opposed to others with similar or different physical, mental or social health need who have been refused transport with a taxi or a personal transport budget?

What are the criteria that some of the 'very few exceptional circumstances' will be offered either transport with a taxi or a personal transport budget, whereas some will be refused?

Finally, how is the 'capacity' of the young person to make an independent bus journey taken into account?"

Ruth Northey to ask:

Appeals against post-16 SEND transport decisions for the academic year 2024/5 are currently being decided upon prior to the publication of the new policy and appeals process. How can you guarantee a transparent and fair appeals process, especially given that I and other parents have been denied a second stage appeal with an independent panel which is recommended in statutory guidance?

Local authorities have to adhere to Post-16 transport and travel support guidance. This guidance states that they should support the commissioning arrangements to make sure they maintain the requirements outlined in an EHCP. Distance to school must be considered. The council's website currently states that a school being "out of area" is not considered an exceptional circumstance. In light of this, what arrangements are being made to follow statutory guidance and facilitate a child's placement when this is some distance from the local area?

Esther Cameron to ask:

We as a group we also represent parents whose young people use the council provided yellow buses which are available to all age groups. We understand that the cuts are a cost-saving exercise, but those buses will still be running now without our children on board. By changing the policy on SEND Post-16 travel to school or college, please can you clarify how the savings are

calculated?

When setting out your Post-16 transport policy, you are supposed to take into account the local transport infrastructure. In the case of my son, the destination for his Post-16 course is an alternative education provider named in his EHCP and approved by Leicester City Council, but which is not served at all by public transport. Can you give details of your transport arrangement for children where their school is not accessible by public transport and parents are unable to provide transport themselves?

Lisa Crabbe to ask:

Local authorities have to adhere to Post-16 transport and travel support guidance. The guidance states that “the local authority must exercise its power to provide transport or financial support reasonably, taking into account all relevant matters”. The council’s website has a long list of individual circumstances which it states it will not consider when making transport decisions. There is no information on circumstances it will consider. How can the council demonstrate that in fact it is making reasonable decisions which take into account ALL relevant matters?

Recommendations have been made by the local authority to parents that their disabled post-16 children should travel independently to school. In some cases, the suggested public transport journeys involve 3-4 changes of transportation and take over the recommended maximum journey time. How is the local authority making decisions about the suitability of independent travel for individual young people, and can they demonstrate that they are taking into account the statutory guidance which states that journeys should not involve multiple changes or be over 75 minutes?

Stephen Score to ask:

The council says it has consulted on changes to Post-16 transport and travel support. Did that include parents/carers whose children are currently 16+ or will be 16-19 from the beginning of next term? How did you inform them of the consultation? How many responses did you get from parents/carers and how were the responses from parents considered as part of the decision-making process?

7. EDUCATION PERFORMANCE REPORT

**Appendix B
(Pages 11 - 62)**

The Director of Education, SEND and Early Help submits the Education Performance Report for 2023 for the Commission to consider areas of strength and concern.

8. FOSTERING SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

**Appendix C
(Pages 63 - 82)**

The Strategic Director of Social Care and Education submits a report to provide

an overview of the activity and performance of the Fostering Service during 2022/23.

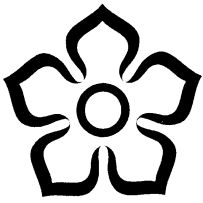
9. FAMILY ADOPTION LINKS REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY ANNUAL REPORT AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE **Appendix D (Pages 83 - 126)**

The Strategic Director of Social Care and Education submits a report providing an overview of the activity and performance of the Family Adoption Links Regional Adoption Agency incorporating Leicester City Adoption Service from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.

10. WORK PROGRAMME **Appendix E (Pages 127 - 134)**

The Commission's Work Programme is attached for information and comment.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS



Leicester
City Council

Appendix A

Minutes of the Meeting of the
CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: TUESDAY, 16 JANUARY 2024 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Batool – Chair
Councillor Cole – Vice-Chair

Councillor Haq
Councillor Pantling

Councillor Dr Moore
Councillor Pickering

In Attendance

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Russell
Assistant City Mayor Councillor Dempster

* * * * *

47. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Joshi and Cllr Barnes.

48. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have had in the business to be discussed.

There were no declarations of interest.

49. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission held on 19 December 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

50. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

51. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

52. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS, AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

The Chair agreed to an agenda variance, The Ashfield Update was taken before the Revenue Budget.

53. ASHFIELD UPDATE

The Director of Education, SEND and Early Help gave a verbal update on Ashfield following the Call-in meeting, particularly regarding the discussions surrounding the proposed tapering of funding.

It was reported that a meeting between Council Officers and Ashfield Academy had been held in December 2023. An offer had been made to taper funding over two years. The head of Ashfield Academy had agreed to consider the offer and discuss it with the governing body and would respond to the offer once they had met.

The Committee were invited to ask questions and make comments. It was noted that the Council Officers and the Executive Lead member for Education, Libraries and Community Centres were happy to put in time and energy to help Ashfield secure alternative funding.

AGREED:

- 1) That the verbal report be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account by the lead officers.
- 3) That members be kept informed of progress.

54. REVENUE BUDGET

The Director of Finance submitted a report detailing the proposed Revenue Budget for 2024/25.

The Executive member for Social Care, Health and Community Safety introduced the report and noted that the Council was in a serious position financially and there was not enough money to carry out its desired aims. A major issue was private care providers charging high costs for placements that did not necessarily meet the needs of the Children. It was further noted that savings and efficiencies had been made where possible and that government

help was unlikely based on the government's approach to Councils who had issued Section 114 notices.

The Head of Finance (Social Care, Public Health, Schools & Corporate Resources) then presented the report.

Key points included:

- The expenditure for 2024/25 would exceed £50m and it would be necessary to make use of reserves to balance the budget.
- Without further saving the need to issue a Section 114 notice would be likely in 2025/26. This would freeze any new financial commitment and would necessitate government intervention.
- Managed reserves would need to be used in full in 2024/25.
- In terms of the outlook beyond 2025/26, whilst public sector expenditure was set to grow overall, increases in areas such as the NHS and defence were such that the IFS (institute for fiscal studies) concluded that areas such as local government funding would see a real terms cut of around 3%.
- In terms of the Children's budget, £17m had been put into the budget for social care and Children Looked After (CLA) costs and £0.5m for legal and translation costs associated with CLA.
- £1.4m had been put into the budget for home-to-school travel for home to school transport for SEND pupils as a result of the increasing numbers of pupils with educational healthcare plans who often need support with transport.
- £0.4m of additional funding had been provided for the educational welfare budget. Changes in legislation meant that previously chargeable casework carried out by the service was now a statutory requirement for which no additional burden funding had been made available from government.
- There were also additional funds for the disabled children's service of £0.2m due to pressures in this service associated with respite costs.
- The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) was in deficit due to pressure on the High Needs Block. A deficit of around £12m was predicted by the end of the financial year. This had been driven by the doubling of the number of EHC plans agreed following the Covid-19 pandemic. A deficit recovery plan would be brought to the next scrutiny meeting.

The Committee were invited to ask questions and make comments. Key points included:

- Further growth in numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) had been factored into the Revenue Budget. It was further clarified that the threshold level for the number of UASC to be taken by councils had increased, and the Council were not yet near this threshold level and were still expected by the government to take on a further 28 UASC. Demand on certain authorities had led to a scheme to

redistribute UASC across Local Authorities and whilst the government had attempted to incentivise Local Authorities with extra money to support delivery through a daily allowance, this did not meet the costs of placements. Additionally, it was explained that some UASC reached the age of 18 without a decision being made on their case. In these instances, the Council still had responsibility for them until the decision was made. It was forecast that the maximum threshold would be met in the next 12 months. It was assumed that the threshold would be raised again in subsequent years.

- It was noted that there is forecast to be an overspend on CLA costs in 2023/24 which would be funded from reserves. There was some uncertainty with regards the forecast, but they were the best estimates available currently. The average placement cost of care was significantly higher than in previous years and it was uncertain if this would be sustained into next year.
- An organisation known as Impower had been brought in to help with regard to ensuring that providers are not charging for support that was not warranted by the needs of the children. Currently, if a Young Person with the need to become looked after came to the attention of the Council, there was not much choice in terms of placement. Some children needed particular types of placements; however, these were not always available and as such it was necessary to find an alternative and sometimes these placements were not ideal. There was a chronic undersupply in the system and every place approached for placements had interest from other Local Authorities. Since supply had not met demand, costs had increased.
- Impower mapped the needs of CLA against the cost of placements, where there were low needs in high-cost placements and high needs in low-cost placements, providers were challenged, and agencies were worked with to find the most appropriate placements for CLA.
- A review had been carried out on a cohort of 200 Children, of which it was established that 58 could move from high-cost external foster care or residential children's home placements to internal foster care or potentially reunified with their families (including extended family). Of this 58, 20 had been moved into alternative placements and 38 were still to progress.
- Another review had been done of 60 Children and a further 20 were identified as needing a better placement, however, this would depend on availability. A new approach was being developed with a needs map (making use of needs profiles) of what foster carers could do. It would also look at the whole cohort to identify where resources could be developed to bring children from expensive placements to local placements at reduced costs. Costs would still not be cheap but would be cheaper than private providers.
- All bar one Council-run children's homes were rated good or outstanding and new developments such as Holly House and Hillview would increase capacity. A five-year investment strategy was in development

to create five more places per year, saving £30k per annum per placement for an extra 25 young people.

- In-house costs were better known than private costs where profit may be a factor. Additionally, in-house children's homes were better tailored to meet the needs of CLA locally, and whilst they may not be cheaper in the short-term, they would be in the long-term. It was further noted that Leicester City Council had held on to a number of their children's homes whereas other councils were needing to start from scratch.
- EHCP appeals were of significant cost to the Council, and it was key to resolve this with the Department for Education as the need to move placements was costly.
- There was £43m in earmarked reserves to address a gap of £50m in 2024/25. As such the emergency reserves needed to be utilised in order to balance the accounts. Reserves not earmarked were moved to managed reserves as part of the £43m to prop-up next year's budget.
- An update from Impower would be brought to the Commission once available.
- In terms of the 20 children who had been moved to an alternative placement, £748k annualised costs had been saved so far and there were a further 58 placements to review. Theoretically, £15m could be saved based on the full looked-after children population.
- Regarding the control of enforced placement costs, the biggest overspend was on CLA and work was being done to gain control. The government had reviewed the operation of the external market. The market was dysfunctional due to excess profiteering, it had been hoped that the market would fix itself, so no new action was taken by government. Costs were challenged where possible.
- Many private providers had pushed for a 10% uplift on payments last year. Regionally it had been agreed not to pay this. A legal challenge followed. It was hoped to bring such a payment uplift down to 1-2% this year.
- It was recognised that private providers provided jobs to local people.
- Independent fostering was not as profit-orientated as private residential care.
- Regarding the projected increase of UASC, spend would increase as more young people moved into care and the cost would depend on where they were placed and their individual needs. It was noted that the trauma that UASC had endured needed to be recognised and the young people supported appropriately.
- Edge-of-care provision included psychological therapy interventions with specialist teams for abuse and neglect and functional family therapy teams. Professionals were worked with to provide crisis support to families. These approaches were very clearly defined as they were licenced, and as such they had clear eligibility criteria. It was recognised that some on the edge of care might not be eligible, as such it was considered as to how resources could be used to cover a wider cohort. It was reported that in the last 12 months, around 40 children were

worked with and only one of these went into care. Follow-ups were carried out to ensure that the position was sustainable and long-term monitoring of progress was undertaken. Outcomes were tracked over up to five years to monitor effectiveness.

- Reserves had been needed to be used to keep services going, and it was necessary to work with the government to see how to work going forward.
- Numbers of UASC who had their cases denied by the Home Office were unknown. However, in terms of families and adults, there was a streamlined process focussing on six nationalities (Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Eritrea and Yemen), of these, it was expected that 90% would be granted leave to remain as these countries were not seen as safe. There was a second phase of this process looking at other nationalities, and asylum applications in this phase may be less successful. It was thought that the profiles of UASC generally mapped the aforementioned six countries, and as such it was thought that most would be granted leave to remain. Many UASC did not get a decision on their applications until after they had turned 18. If they were not granted leave to remain after turning 18 and lost their appeal, then there was a conflict in legislation as there was a responsibility to get them into accommodation as care-leavers under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 however this could be seen as in conflict with the Illegal Migration Act 2023. Local Authorities were keen to know which act took precedence.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account by the lead officers.
- 3) That the report be brought to Overview Select Committee prior to Full Council.

55. CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Director of Finance submitted a report detailing the proposed Capital Programme for 2024/25. It was noted that there was £7.1m set aside in Schools Capital maintenance across the schools estate.

The Committee were invited to ask questions and make comments. Key points included:

- In response to a query about heat pumps in schools and the associated costs, it was explained that the Council were working on the issue with Western Power. However, this was not part of the Capital Programme, but part of a funding programme across schools. The Capital Programme related to issues such as basic maintenance.

- More money for issues such as repairs was always desirable. Schools received some funding for minor repairs, but major repairs came through the Council.
- It was recognised that good work was carried out across schools, however, to deliver more, there was difficulty regarding capacity as more staff would need to be brought in.
- A presentation of work done with Capital over the last 12 months would be brought to the Commission.
- Secondary schools had been rebuilt under the building schools for the future programme and this had been a big undertaking. However, it was commented that primary schools needed work.
- A written response would be provided regarding recent views from MPs and the Local Government Association (LGA) on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Provision and Funding.
- The number of Children with SEND was growing, but money was not available to address Children's needs in the best way.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account by the lead officers.
- 3) That the report be brought to Overview Select Committee prior to Full Council.
- 4) That a presentation of work done with Capital over the last 12 months would be brought to the Commission.
- 5) That a written response on recent views from MPs and the Local Government Association (LGA) on SEND Provision and Funding be provided to the Commission by the Director of Education, SEND and Early Help.

56. YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN

The Director of Childrens Social Care and Community Safety submitted a report to provide the Commission with the Annual Youth Justice Plan, highlighting progress to date and new emerging priorities.

The Executive member for Social Care, Health and Community Safety introduced the report and noted that inspections had found good practice and whilst there was always work to do the understanding that the team had was good.

The Director of Childrens Social Care & Community Safety, The Head of Service Early Help (Targeted Services) and Service Manager (Integrated Services) presented the report.

Key points included:

- The three-year plan was updated on an annual basis. It was currently in

its second year. This was the first year in which young people had been fully engaged to help produce the plan.

- The young people involved had emphasised that they needed strong role models and needed to be supported to achieve and be aspirational. It was important that they were believed-in, respected and not judged. The involvement of young people ensured that priorities were delivered on.
- Key performance areas included a significant reduction in Children Looked After (CLA) open to the Youth Justice Service. This had risen in previous years but was now below the national average. This had been achieved by working in partnership as well as by supporting residential homes, putting restorative justice work in place and creating bespoke group work programmes for CLA.
- A 'child-first' approach was taken, and it was ensured that partners such as the Police were engaged with this, making sure that children involved were seen as children before they were seen as offenders.
- A remand strategy had been developed with the Police that was child-focussed. This had helped with performance.
- Custody rates had been worked on. Whereas in previous years there had been between 60-80 young people in custody over 12 months (higher than the national average), in the last 12 months, there had been only one young person placed in a custodial establishment. It was acknowledged that it was sometimes necessary to place young people in custody, however, alternatives to custody were explored and victims were worked with.
- There were high numbers of young people in education, training and employment. This had been a challenge for post-16 young people during the Covid-19 pandemic as many were on casual contracts or let go from work due to the pandemic. Employers and trainers had been worked with on this over the last 12 months.
- Work on neurodiversity needs had been undertaken over the last 12 months, training staff and working in partnership to ensure that children and young people received the right support.
- There was a challenge surrounding reoffending rates. The data tracked a small cohort meaning that a single offence could create a big swing in statistics. This had resulted in reoffending rate that was higher than the national average. A Reoffending Group met weekly to ensure that reports from the Police were dealt with quickly and young people were worked with to prevent reoffending.
- Successes had included the Reach Project, which mentored children who were at risk of exclusion and trained staff in neurodiversity. This was externally evaluated by Sheffield Hallam University and was seen to be a big success. The project had received short-term funding and work was being carried out to secure further funding.
- Another success had been the Summer Arts College. Government funding for this had been removed, however, it had been internally decided to continue with its delivery and staff with appropriate skills had

been reached out to. The college was a six-week full-time programme for young people and all participants had received an arts award, with some also gaining apprenticeships with the Curve theatre.

- Challenges had included funding, and the situation would need to be monitored. External funding had been received from the Police, the Probation Service and Health Services. There was a need to maintain a strong budget to ensure delivery.
- A number of Young People came through pre-court services such as Early Intervention and people were accessing diversionary activities through partnerships and were able to establish mechanisms to identify the relevant young people sooner and proactively work with communities and with children and young people at risk to proactively engage them with diversionary work.

The Chair thanked the officers for their presentation.

The Committee were invited to ask questions and make comments. Key points included:

- Youth justice workers worked with complex and challenging young people. It was difficult but there was a well-trained staff group who worked intensive hours with vulnerable children and young people. A programme was worked to support children and young people and there was a duty roster to work on evenings and weekends.
- Every child and young person in the youth justice system had a case manager and advocate, receiving one-to-one support. These children and young people co-produced their own plans, some were very detailed and others less-so depending on the needs of the child or young person. Support was sometimes sought from services such as the psychology service.
- 20 out of 80 young people were engaged in a plan. This was the first year that individual plans were used and as such numbers could increase year-on-year. Outcomes were outstanding and the numbers going back to court were small. However, young people did go to court if they did not comply with their plan as it was important that they knew there was an impact if they did not comply.
- Work was contextualised and people such as teachers and neighbours became involved as appropriate to support young people.
- The numbers of reoffenders were fairly static, but frequent reoffenders were a small group. The most prolific reoffenders were reoffending within around 30 days of sentencing. Reoffenders were assessed as to why they reoffended and worked with to see how they could desist. It was noted that influences on young people such as County Lines gangs and other organised crime were a big factor. Reoffending was of concern, and it was acknowledged that it was difficult for parents to influence children where other people had an influence on them.
- Organisations such as the Phoenix Project were engaged in partnerships to work with young people and the community at the right

time with a co-produced plan and supported by organisations such as the police and community safety. There was a focus on consequences and young people were worked with on the plans in place, including looking at employment, education and training.

- Work had been done on demographic disproportionality within the prison population, including a task and finish group on the issue. Demographics across the city were reflected in the preventative side and statutory side of youth justice and work had been done within courts on issues such as unconscious bias. Early intervention work had targeted particular communities in which people may have become disenfranchised so as to make sure they got the right intervention and the right message at the right time. Nationally work had been done with young black males to ensure that they had the same opportunities as all young people as this demographic were often treated differently.
- All people form ages 10-17 with a court outcome came through the youth justice system.
- Young offenders were worked with on a resettlement plan when they came out of custody. Seven pathways were worked with, and if these seven areas of resettlement were not achieved then reoffending became likely. Work was undertaken on accommodation for young people upon their release to ensure that it was suitable.

AGREED:

- 1) That the verbal report be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account by the lead officers.
- 3) That the report be brought to Full Council.

57. WORK PROGRAMME

Members of the Commission were invited to consider content of the work programme and were invited to make suggestions for additions as appropriate to be brought to future meetings.

It was noted that the next meeting of the commission had moved and would now take place on 26th March 2024.

The work programme was noted.

58. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no further items of urgent business, the meeting finished at 19:23.

Education Performance Report 2023

Children Young People and Schools Scrutiny
Commission

Date of meeting: 26 March 2024
Lead director/officer: Sophie Maltby

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Jane Pierce, Children's Programme Manager – Business Change
- Author contact details: jane.pierce@leicester.gov.uk ; 376123
- Report version number: v3

Summary

Over the last 15 years, the school and education governance landscape in England has undergone considerable change, driven by various government policies and reforms. That has meant significant changes to the roles and responsibilities of Local Authorities in the education landscape. Some of the key changes include:

Decentralisation of School Management: Perhaps the biggest change has been a reduced Local Authority role in direct management of schools. Academies and free schools have their own governing bodies and greater autonomy over areas such as curriculum, staffing, and finances.

Education Funding: The Local Authority still plays a role in distributing funding to schools, although the introduction of academies and changes to funding arrangements have reduced this role. LAs are responsible for implementing the national funding formula, which determines how much funding schools receive based on various factors such as pupil numbers and deprivation levels.

Placement Sufficiency and Standards: While the Local Authority no longer directly manages many schools, we still have responsibilities for Placement sufficiency (ensuring there are enough school places available) and for overseeing the performance and standards of all schools in our area. We continue to have a role in commissioning new school places, intervening in underperforming schools, and providing support and guidance to schools.

Education Welfare: The Local Authority retains responsibility for children's education welfare, including ensuring that children attend school regularly and addressing issues related to attendance and children missing education.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Support: There is a greater emphasis on inclusion and mainstream schooling to support children with SEND and changes to the way support is funded and delivered. Most recently, the Change Programme Partnership is testing proposed policy reforms over the next 2 years.

School Improvement: While LAs no longer have direct control over many schools, they continue to have responsibilities for school improvement. This includes providing support and intervention for underperforming schools, facilitating collaboration and partnership working between schools, and promoting best practices in teaching and learning.

Overall, the Local Authority continues to have responsibilities for ensuring children receive an education, through attendance management, monitoring electively home educated children, providing school transport for eligible groups of children and ensuring the quality and provision of education in our local area, particularly in areas such as education welfare, SEND support, and school improvement.

The 2023 Education Performance results that are presented in this report are for those children whose education is in the city of Leicester and in state funded education. It includes children who attend Leicester schools no matter where they live. Children who live in Leicester but who are educated elsewhere, or in the independent sector are not included.

The 2023 results show that education outcomes in Leicester and nationally in primary school assessments are lower than before the pandemic.

Outcomes for the end of primary (key stage 2) and the end of secondary (key stage 4) show that attainment have not bounced back as quickly as nationally following a fall in 2022 that many areas of the country experienced.

Leicester's school children no longer make better progress than national in primary schools at the end of KS2, except in Mathematics

At the end of Key stage 4, the results achieved are below national across all measures, however the gap to national has narrowed this year compared to 2022.

Areas of strength in education performance in Leicester

- The gap to national for pupils in Early Years Foundation Stage to achieve a good level of development has closed from 5% points in 2021/22 to 3.9% in 2022/23
- In 2023, a greater percentage (68.1%) of Asian and Any other ethnic group children (60.2%) in Leicester met a Good Level of Development than those nationally at 66.7% and 59.1% respectively.
- At the end of Yr6, a higher proportion of pupils (74%) are meeting the expected standard in maths than national (73%) but the gap from national to Leicester closed in 2023.
- Children eligible for Free School meals perform better than their peers nationally at all key stages.

Areas of concern

- Leicester is at the bottom of all 152 local authorities for the GLD measure for pupils of White heritage at the end of Early Years Foundation Stage, and those of Mixed heritage are in the bottom 10%. There is a challenge for schools with still only two thirds of children in Leicester reaching GLD
- Leicester has the lowest percentage of children of white heritage achieving a good level of development compared to all 152 other local authorities
- Average progress scores have fallen in Reading and Writing. Mathematics remain much the same as 2022. However, progress in reading and writing have fallen to national levels from high progress in 2022 of 0.57 and 0.32 respectively.
- Children with EHCPs continue to do worse than other children including those with SEN support.

The SEND, Education and Early Years division of the council works in partnership to monitor the performance of all schools and where there are concerns about a local authority-maintained school these are raised with the governors as well as the headteachers. The division also works closely with health professionals, those who work with families and early years children and with early years providers to share and better understand the issues for our youngest children in being ready for school.

The role of local authorities in relation to education and particularly school improvement has reduced over the past 12 years, however strategic and senior leaders across education work together in a shared commitment to support children and young people to achieve good educational outcomes and increase their opportunities to flourish. Schools are accountable to their governing bodies or their Multi-Academy Trusts and are inspected by Ofsted as to the quality of their provision.

1. Recommended actions/decision

To note the report and consider areas of strength and concern.

The report will be shared with education colleagues across the city to ensure an awareness of the overall performance of children educated in the city.

2. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

None

3. Background

The results that are used in this report are for those children whose education is in the city of Leicester and in state funded education. It includes children who attend Leicester schools no matter where they live. Children who live in Leicester but who are educated elsewhere, or in the independent sector are not included.

In this report comparison of the 2023 results are made to those reported in 2022 and to the national (England) outcomes.

The appendices in this report provide detailed data on comparing outcomes for different groups of pupils in Leicester to those groups nationally.

Assessments are made at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage for all children in schools or in nursery settings at the end of the school year in which the child turns 5.

National assessments of children in primary schools are made in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of year 6 (end of key stage 2)– the last year of primary school and the end of year 2 – the last year of key stage 1. Children in year 1 are also tested on their phonics skills and in year 4 on their multiplication tables.

Normally children take nationally recognised GCSEs and other qualifications during the summer term in year 11. Year 11 is the last year of statutory schooling and is the year in which children are normally aged 15 at the beginning of the academic year and reach the end of key stage 4.

The data used in this report includes attainment data – the outcomes that the children have achieved. We have also included progress data for key stage 2 and key stage 4. Progress data is a measure of the difference between the attainment at the previous age and the current attainment compared to those of other children nationally. The greater the progress score, the greater the progress made by the pupil compared to the average for pupils with similar prior attainment. Individual pupil progress scores are not shared with parents or pupils.

The groups provided in the report include Gender, Ethnicity by major group, SEN status, Free School Meals and Language status. The demographic information is provided by parents to the school and is collected through school census. It should be noted that free school meals eligibility only includes those children whose parents have applied for free school meals and have been found to be eligible due to the benefits they receive. Children whose parents do not apply or who do not receive the qualifying benefits are not included in this group.

The charts in the main body of the report illustrate the performance of different groups of Leicester pupils compared to the performance of these groups in other local authorities. The best or most improved outcomes and ranks compared to national data for the same groups are in the top right quadrant.

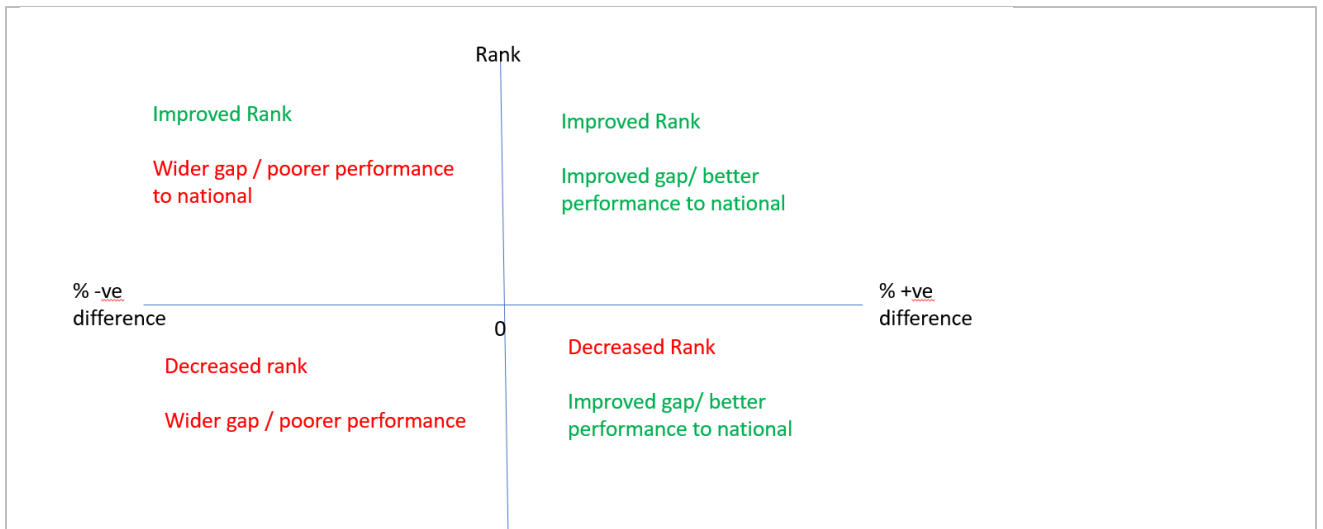


Figure 1: Diagram showing the layout of the quadrant charts

Within the charts there is consistency in the colours for the different groups shown below.

All pupils	Orange
Boys	Blue
Girls	Amber
Asian	Red
Black	Tan
White	Lime
EHCP (Education Health Care Plan)	Bright Green
SEN (SEN support in schools)	Dark Green
FSM (Known to be eligible for Free School Meals)	Soft Blue
English (as first language)	Blue with orange border
EAL (English as an Additional Language)	Violet

4. Detailed report

1.1. Early Years Foundation Stage

Children are assessed by their teachers at the end of the school year in which they turn 5. They are assessed on whether they have met the expected standard across 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs). These 17 ELGs are grouped into 7 areas of learning.

A child is at a Good Level of Development if they are at the expected standard across 12 ELGs in five areas of learning: communication and language; personal, social and emotional development; physical development, literacy and mathematics. Communication and language and literacy are assessed in English.

In this report data is used to compare Communication and Language as an area of learning and to analyse the Good Level of Development (GLD) measure.

Results for all children at the end of the Foundation Stage across schools and Early Years settings are submitted to the local authority for checking before submitting to the Department for Education.

- 1.1.1.** In our previous annual report in 2022, the percentage of children in Leicester at a Good Level of Development dropped by 1% more than the national percentage after a trend of several years of improvement up to the pandemic.

In 2023, Leicester made more of an improvement (3.1% points to reach 63.6%) than national (at 67.2%) to meet a Good Level of Development. The gap to national closed again, from 5% points in 2022 to 3.9% in 2023. This measure is considered useful for determining whether children are “Ready for School”. It shows that there is a challenge for schools with still only two thirds of children in Leicester reaching this measure and also possibly highlights that there is a longer tail impact of the pandemic.

- 1.1.2.** At 70.5%, *there is still a greater percentage of girls who met GLD compared to boys (56.6%).*
- 1.1.3.** Reviewing the outcomes for different groups using the GLD measure show that a greater percentage (68.1%) of Asian and Any other ethnic group children (60.2%) in Leicester met a Good Level of Development than those nationally at 66.7% and 59.1% respectively. The gap between National and Leicester outcomes has closed for pupils of Black and Mixed but for pupils who are of White heritage it has widened to 8.3%. The outcome for white pupils was 60.3% compared to the same group nationally at 68.6%.

In 2023, Leicester has the lowest percentage of children of white heritage achieving a good level of development compared to all 152 other local authorities. For children of mixed heritage, the proportion is in the lowest 10% of local authorities.

- 1.1.4.** Children who have SEN including those with an EHCP do significantly worse than other pupils with fewer than 1 in 5 achieving a good level of development, although both groups have closed the gap to national percentages.
- 1.1.5.** Using Free School Meals as an indicator of deprivation, results show that a greater proportion (54%) of deprived children in Leicester (rank 45 out of 152) are ready for school than the same group nationally at 52%. However, pre-pandemic, 61% of Leicester children achieved this measure demonstrating that children who are

eligible for free school meals appear to continue to be more greatly affected by the pandemic than other children.

Outcomes in Leicester for those who are not eligible for free school meals, whilst higher than their FSM peers, is worse than national and ranks at 145. This is however better than last year's ranking at 149.

- 1.1.6.** 63% of children whose first language is believed to be other than English reached a good level of development in Leicester and 62% nationally. The gap in outcomes between Leicester and national has closed by 2% points since 2022 for those who have English as their first language with 67% of children in Leicester compared to 69% nationally.

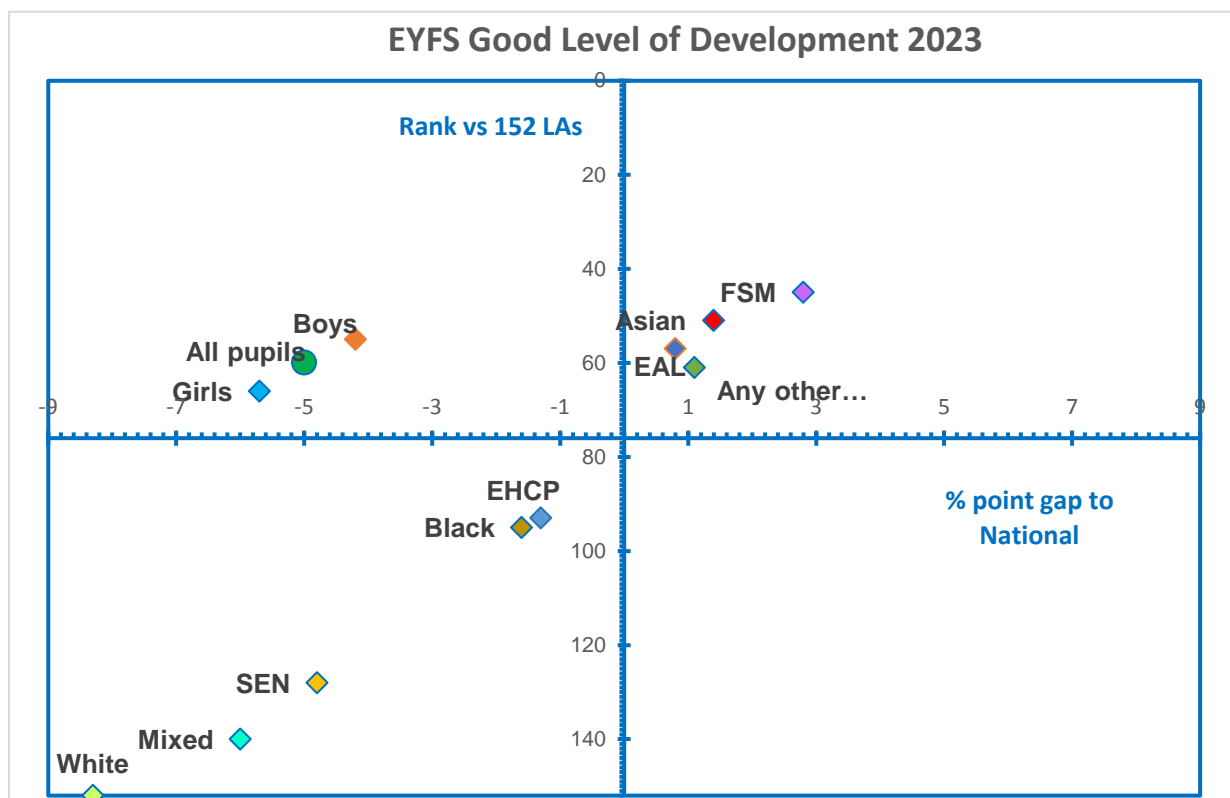


Figure 2 Comparison of Good Level of Development in 2023 in Leicester to National, ranking by group

- 1.1.7. In summary for Early Years Foundation Stage** the comparison of outcomes in Leicester in 2023 to national shows that Asian children, EAL children and children with Free School Meals do better than their national peers. Children with any other ethnic group also do better than national peers, however this group is a small cohort. The outcomes of children of mixed and of white heritage and those with SEN support do significantly worse. These low starting points of children starting formal education at the beginning of year 1 means that they have to make very good progress in order to catch-up with their peers.

This data for 2023 shows some groups where Leicester is closing the gap to national performance. However there will still have been considerable disruption to these children and their opportunities for learning due to the long tail impact of the pandemic.

1.2. Phonics

- 1.2.1.** The Year 1 phonics screening check is undertaken during a week in June. Children are required to read to their teacher 40 phonetic “words”. These are groups of letters which the child is required to read using their phonic skills. It

assesses whether the child is on track to become a fluent reader. The pass mark is 32 out of 40.

All children in year 1 are included in the cohort but a teacher can disapply a child if they do not feel it would be appropriate for the child to be assessed e.g. if a child is newly arrived or at an early stage of phonic skill. Children who fail to meet the standard or are disappplied have to take the test again in the summer of year 2.

Results for all children in year 1 and those in year 2 who did not achieve the standard when they were in year 1 are submitted to the local authority for checking before submitting to the Department for Education.

- 1.2.2. In 2023, the proportion of children who met the standard across the country, after falling in 2022, increased. In Leicester, there has also been an increase, but less than the national average increase. This has widened the gap by 1% point for all Leicester children, for girls and for boys.
- 1.2.3. In Leicester 75% of children met the standard compared to 72% in 2022 and 81% in 2019, which was a drop of 6% points since 2019. In the same time period, there was a national 3%point drop to 79%. In 2023, Leicester's rank was 138 out of 152, moving down from 2022 where it was 127. In 2019 Leicester's rank was 91.
- 1.2.4. The difference in performance in phonics between different groups of pupils in Leicester was similar to the variations for EYFS with Mixed and White heritage and those with EHCP and SEN doing less well than for other groups. Children eligible for FSM performed less well than their non-FSM peers in Leicester but still better than FSM children elsewhere.
- 1.2.5. **In summary** Leicester has not made the recovery as quickly as nationally in performance outcomes for year 1 phonics screening check since the pre-pandemic 2019 outcomes. There has been a bigger drop in the proportion meeting the phonics standard in Leicester than there was nationally in 2022, however in 2023, Leicester closed the gap to national by 1%point to have a gap of 3%points

1.3. Key Stage 1

- 1.3.1. Children are assessed at the end of Key Stage 1 during the summer term of year 2. The child is judged as to whether they have reached the expected standard, (or are at Greater Depth or are working below the expected standard), through moderated teacher assessment, in reading, writing and mathematics. They are also assessed in science. Children undertake tests and tasks in reading and mathematics, during May, which are used to inform the teacher assessment. The local authority is responsible for moderating a 25% sample of schools to ensure consistency. Academies can choose which local authority will moderate them.

Results data for all children who are in year 2 are submitted to the local authority for checking before submitting to the Department for Education at the end of June.

At key stage 1 results are reported on the proportion of children who have achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics separately.

2022/23 was the final year that end of key stage 1 assessments were statutory so they will no longer be published. The Standards and Testing agency will continue to produce SATs tests in reading, maths and grammar, punctuation, and spelling (GPS) for optional use. The Reception Baseline Assessment will take the place of KS1 assessments as the basis for cohort level primary progress calculations.

- 1.3.2. The percentage of children reaching the expected standard for reading rose from 61% in 2022 to 63% in 2023, after a 9% point fall from 2019 to 2022. The gap to

national has closed by 1% point in 2023, attributable to girls, leaving a gap of 8% with National (at 68%). The boys did not close the gap and remain at 6% points below national.

In writing the percentage of children reaching the expected standard rose from 54% in 2022 to 56% in 2023, after a 11% point fall from 2019 to 2022. The gap to national remains at 4%points. The gap in performance between boys and girls for this measure is 13%points in Leicester – compared to 12%points nationally.

In mathematics the rise was 3%points from 2022 to 67% reaching the expected standard. 2023 saw the gap closed by 1%point to be 3% behind national (70% of all pupils reaching expected standard in mathematics). The proportion of Leicester girls reaching the expected standard in mathematics was greater at 68% than the boys at 66%. This performance gap has widened between girls and boys by 1%point, and girls outperformed boys by 3%points.

- 1.3.3.** At Key stage 1 in 2023 children of White heritage in Leicester still perform less well than other groups across all three subjects although the gap has closed by 1%point. In writing just over half (52%) the children of White heritage reached the expected standard compared to 60% nationally for the same group. 60% Asian and 62% Black heritage children reached this measure.

Other ethnic groups in Leicester did less well across reading, writing and mathematics than other areas when compared to the same outcomes in 2019, in 2022 and again in 2023. Outcomes for White heritage pupils were marginally better, closing the gap by 1%point, but remain in the bottom 10 local authorities for the percentage of children achieving the expected standard. Rankings rose for white heritage pupils by 1 in writing and mathematics, for Black heritage pupils across all 3 areas and for Asian heritage pupils in reading.

- 1.3.4.** For children with an EHCP achieving the expected standards, performance moved by 1%point in reading (down to 6%), and in writing (up to 4%) and fell 2%points in mathematics (down to 8%). The gap for mathematics has increased by 3%points to national which stands at 15%. Overall the gaps to national means that Leicester has slipped down the ranking, particularly for reading (by 18) and mathematics (by 21). Children with an EHCP do significantly worse in meeting these measures than children with SEND support.

For children who have SEN support in schools there was a greater proportion of children meeting the standard across writing and mathematics subjects, with 1% point and 2%points above national respectively. Leicester has moved up the ranking in writing and mathematics and slipped by 17 in reading compared to other local authorities

- 1.3.5.** Outcomes for the 26% of the KS1 children who are eligible for Free School Meals remain higher for all three subjects than the same group nationally (25% of the cohort). However, overall children eligible for FSM do not perform as well as those who are not FSM eligible. There was a 5%points increase in performance for mathematics compared to 4%points nationally. National pupils narrowed the gap with Leicester pupils for writing by 1%point. The ranking for the outcomes of this group of pupils in Leicester has improved again, except for reading: From 52 to 50 out of 152 local authorities in reading, from 42 to 37 in mathematics and from 37 to 48 in writing.

Children who are not eligible for Free School Meals still perform significantly worse in Leicester than the same group nationally across all measures and this is

reflected in the ranking with Reading 148 (out of 152), writing 138 and mathematics 144.

1.3.6. Children who use a first language other than English (EAL) performed less well in reading than those whose first language is believed to be English (non-EAL) with 61% EAL reaching the expected standard compared to 67%. The gap is 6%points and is a further widening of the gap compared to national which is 5%points, where 65% EAL reached the expected standard.

In writing 57% of both children with EAL and non-EAL met the standard. This was a drop of 11 points from 2019 to 2022 for EAL but some recovery was made in 2023 with an increase of 3 points.

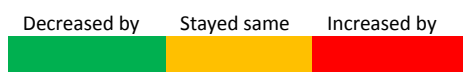
Outcomes for mathematics showed an improvement in the proportion of EAL children reaching the expected standard compared to 2022, from 65% to 68%, although this is still a significant drop from 2019 (at 75%).

When comparing these groups with other local authorities the rankings for those with EAL remain better than for those with English as their first language.

1.3.7. Changes in the gap to national since 2019.

The tables below compare whether the difference between Leicester and national outcomes for key stage 1 have closed or got wider since 2019. Negative figures in red show that the gap has increased by that %point since 2019.

In 2023, it can be seen that overall children’s attainment in Leicester’s schools at the end of key stage 1 compared to national has improved from 2022 and is now at the same gap to national as in 2019. The majority of groups in Writing have kept or closed the gap to national (except for Any other ethnic group) Although there has been some improvement and closing of the gap for many of the groups, children are still at a lower starting point compared to their peers nationally as they enter key stage 2.



KS1 Groups – % Reading Expected	Gap movement since 2019	Gap in 2023	Gap in 2022	Gap in 2019
All pupils	0	-5	-6	-5
Boys	-1	-6	-6	-5
Girls	0	-5	-6	-5
Asian	-3	-5	-5	-2
Black	6	0	-4	-6
White	2	-8	-9	-10
Any other ethnic	-5	-3	7	2
EHCP (Education Health Care Plan)	4	-6	-5	-10
SEN (SEN support in schools)	0	-1	-1	-1
FSM (eligible for Free School Meals)	1	1	1	0
English (as first language)	2	-3	-4	-5
EAL (English as Additional Language)	-2	-4	-4	-2

KS1 Groups – % Writing Expected	Gap movement since 2019	Gap in 2023	Gap in 2022	Gap in 2019
All pupils	0	-4	-4	-4
Boys	1	-4	-5	-5
Girls	2	-3	-3	-5
Asian	-2	-4	-3	-2
Black	10	1	-1	-9
White	3	-8	-9	-11
Any other ethnic	-7	-4	4	3
EHCP (Education Health Care Plan)	3	-4	-4	-7
SEN (SEN support in schools)	2	1	1	-1
FSM (eligible for Free School Meals)	3	2	3	-1
English (as first language)	1	-4	-4	-5
EAL (English as Additional Language)	2	-1	-2	-3

KS1 Groups – % Maths Expected	Gap movement since 2019	Gap in 2023	Gap in 2022	Gap in 2019
All pupils	0	-3	-4	-3
Boys	-2	-5	-4	-3
Girls	0	-2	-2	-2
Asian	-3	-3	-2	0
Black	7	3	-2	-4
White	1	-6	-7	-7
Any other ethnic	-12	-8	4	4
EHCP (Education Health Care Plan)	2	-7	-4	-9
SEN (SEN support in schools)	-1	2	0	3
FSM (eligible for Free School Meals)	3	3	2	0
English (as first language)	0	-3	-2	-3
EAL (English as Additional Language)	-1	-1	-2	0

1.3.8. Comparison of KS1 subjects in 2023 in Leicester to National and how the local authority ranks compared to 152 other Local Authorities.

In summary, the charts below show the comparison of outcomes in Leicester in 2023 to national for different groups. It shows some groups where Leicester is closing the gap to, or above national performance.

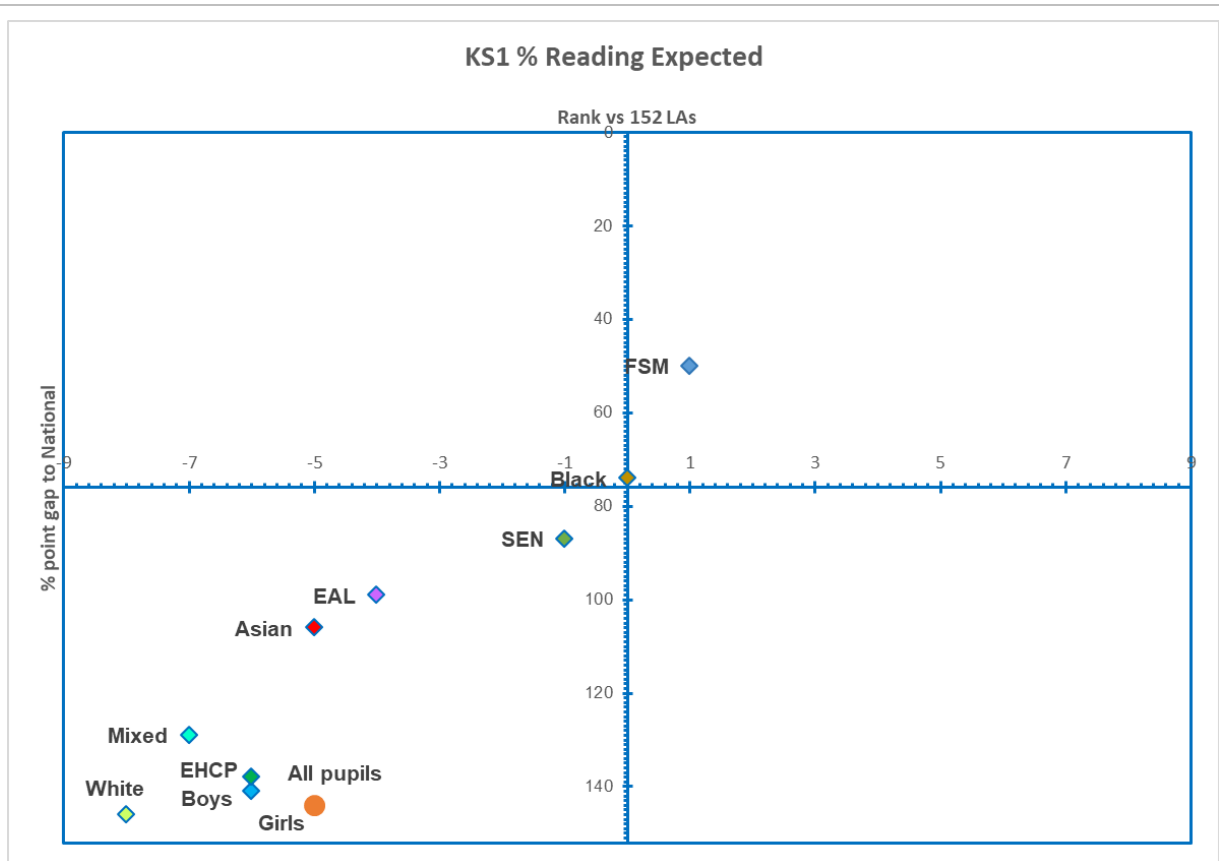


Figure 3 Comparison of KS1 Reading in 2023 in Leicester to National, ranking by group

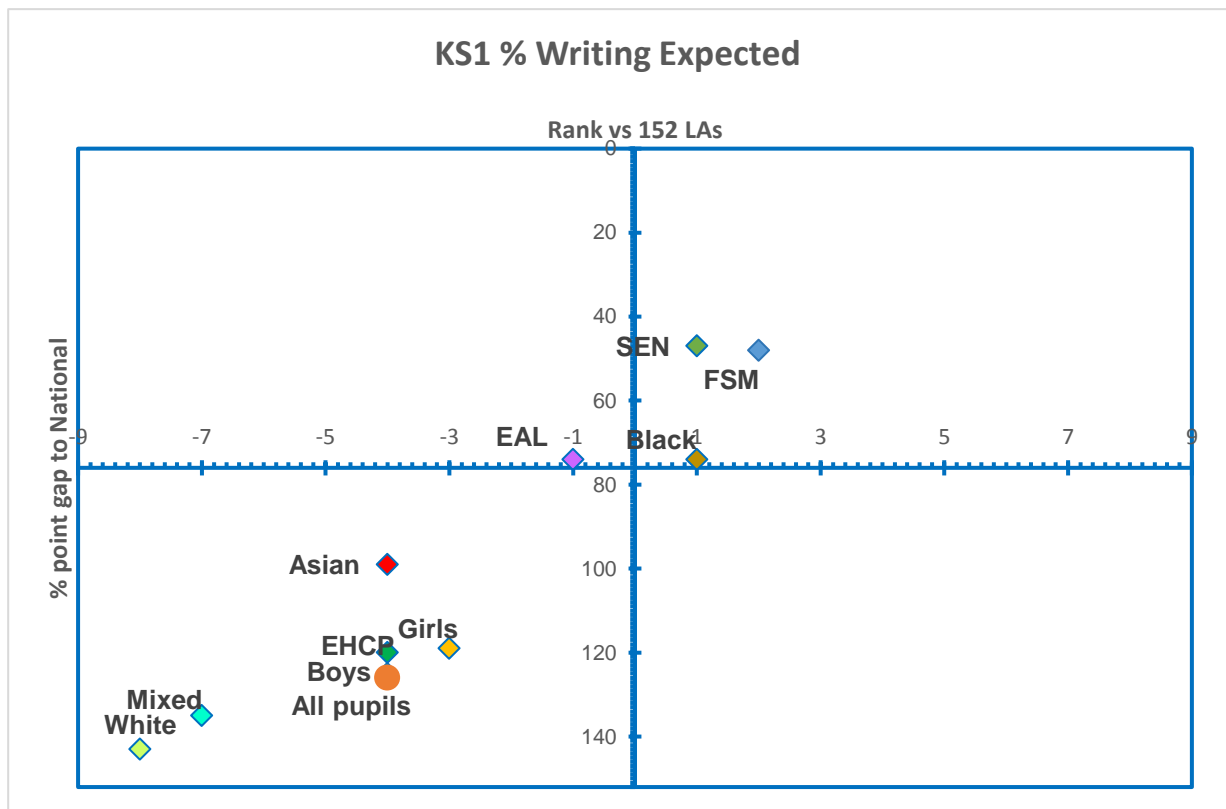


Figure 4 Comparison of KS1 Writing in 2023 in Leicester to National, ranking by group.

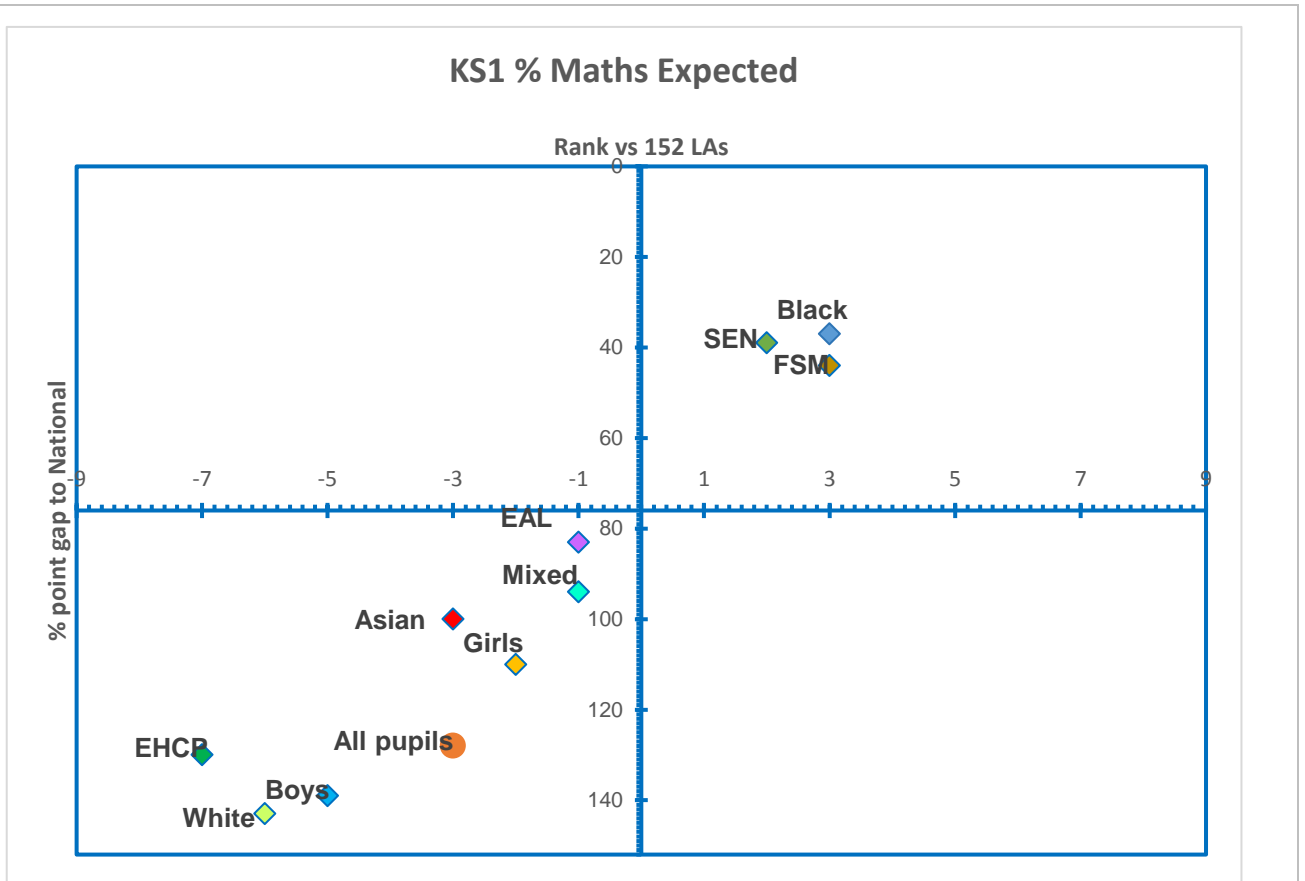


Figure 5 Comparison of KS1 Mathematics in 2023 in Leicester to National, ranking by group.

1.4. Key Stage 2

1.4.1. Children are assessed at the end of Key Stage 2 during the summer term of year 6. They undertake timed, externally marked tests in Reading, Mathematics and Grammar Punctuation and Spelling. Writing is teacher assessed in school and a range of completed writing is reviewed to make this assessment. Science is also assessed through unmoderated teacher assessment. 25% of schools each year are externally moderated by the local authority for writing assessment. The percentage of children who achieve the expected standard and the higher standard in the tests and assessment are reported for each local authority and nationally. In 2022 results were not published school by school but there has been a return to publishing of performance tables in 2023.

Teacher assessments for writing and science for all children and in reading and mathematics for those children who are below the level of the tests are submitted via the local authority to the Department for Education at the end of June.

Externally marked test results are sent to the schools and the local authority in the first week of July. During September schools can apply for children who are new arrivals to be removed from the reported results. These are children who have arrived from overseas, from a country that does not use English as an official language, since the beginning of year 5.

In addition to the outcome measures children's results in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 are matched to their key stage 1 results that were assessed at the end of year 2. A progress score for each school/ local authority is created by comparing the progress across the whole year group nationally for that subject. This gives a positive score if the progress is better than average and a negative score if it is worse.

In 2023 only 89% of the children being assessed at the end of key stage 2 had results from key stage 1. Therefore 10.6% of the cohort are excluded from the progress measures. These children will be new arrivals who were not in the country at the end of KS1 so progress cannot be measured. These children are included in the attainment measures.

It should be noted that in 2022, the DfE announced a Levelling Up mission for 90% of pupils to meet the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at the end of key stage 2 by 2030.

- 1.4.2.** The proportion of children in Leicester reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in 2023 was 58%. The gap to national improved in 2022, however in 2023, the gap increased 1%point, to a current gap of 2%points to national. Boys narrowed the gap and girls widened the gap and both are now 2%points gaps from national measures. In 2022, Girls outperformed boys by 10%points and in 2023 boys narrowed that gap to 6%points.

Leicester's rank compared to other local authorities for this measure has fallen from 82 in 2022 to 95 in 2023 and is due to a fall in ranking mainly for the girls. The ranking for girls in reading and writing is lower than for boys but is higher (at 54) compared to boys (at 67) for mathematics.

Outcomes in reading have fallen nationally, but more so locally with a 4%points fall to 69% of pupils meeting expected standard in reading. Outcomes for mathematics are 1%point above national at 74% and national outcomes overtook our local outcomes for writing by 2%points. Schools are still working hard to address the challenges of developing sustained writing, following the impact of remote learning/pandemic closures.

In 2022, the average progress between key stage 1 and key stage 2 for this cohort was above the national average in all three subjects; in 2023 average progress has fallen in reading and writing. Mathematics progress remains much the same as 2022. The progress in reading and writing have fallen almost to national levels from a higher progress in 2022 of 0.57 and 0.32 respectively. In mathematics the progress was above national and is ranked at 20 out of 152 local authorities. Nationally and in Leicester the average progress for boys is less than for girls however in Leicester the rank of progress for boys is 63 (out of 152) compared to 101 for girls in reading, 16 compared to 23 in mathematics, and 61 compared to 76 in writing.

- 1.4.3.** Children of Asian heritage outperform other groups locally in meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics however now have a wider (4%points) gap to national than in 2022. The rank for Asian children comparing the same group in other LAs is 108 out of 152

In Leicester children of White heritage perform least well of the major groups with only 51% of pupils achieving the required standard in reading, writing and mathematics. This is an increased gap of 1% to have an 8%point gap to national. The ranking for this group in Leicester has increased 8 places to 148 out of 152.

Outcomes for individual subjects in 2022 varied between 1%point to 4%points for Asian pupils. Children of Mixed heritage achieved the national standard for Reading (75%) and for mathematics (74%).

Only children of Black heritage outperformed their national peers in any individual subject – with 77% meeting expected standards of mathematics compared to 74% nationally.

Progress for all groups in each of reading, writing and mathematics in 2022 were not better than national apart from:

- Progress scores for children of black, of mixed and of any other ethnic group were above national in Maths.
- Progress scores for children of mixed heritage were above national in Reading.

1.4.4. Children who had an EHCP had worse outcomes at the end of Key Stage 2 in Leicester than those nationally and results were worse than those in 2022. Of those in receipt of SEN support in school outcomes were better than the same groups nationally only in mathematics.

Compared to other local authorities the ranking for all measures for those with EHCP has significantly disimproved and lie in the middle to bottom half of all local authorities. This is a change from 2022 where the ranking for measures for EHCPs lay in the top half of all local authorities. For those children with SEN support, rankings still predominantly lie in the top half except for the proportion of children achieving the expected standard in all three measures as well as individual measures for reading and for writing. These ranks have fallen since 2022.

1.4.5. Children eligible for Free School Meals in Leicester have better outcomes in writing and mathematics and in the combination of the subjects than the same group nationally. The outcomes have slipped for reading to 3%points lower than national. However still less than half of children (48%) eligible are achieving this measure in the combination of subjects. In 2022 it was 46% and it was 50% in 2019. The ranking for this combined measure is 39 out of 152 local authorities.

Progress for those eligible for Free School Meals in Leicester for each of reading (rank 36), writing (rank 71) and mathematics (rank 17) is lower than the average progress for all pupils but is better in mathematics than the progress made by this group nationally.

1.4.6. The proportion of children who are known to have English as an Additional Language achieving reading writing and mathematics in 2023 was 59%, a drop of 5%points from 2019 which is more of a drop than national, now at 62%. For those who have English as their first language 57% achieved this measure compared to 59% nationally. This was a 5%point drop locally and a 6%point nationally.

Progress for children with EAL was better in Leicester than national for mathematics, therefore reading progress has disimproved. There was similar progress for those who had English as their first language.

1.4.7. In summary

The following table shows the movement in the gap to national for each group between 2019 and 2023. The subsequent charts show the current 2023 position for different pupil groups with respect to attainment and progress compared to national and their ranking versus other local authorities.

Analysis in these formats shows that 2023 outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils with FSM lie in the top 30% of all local authorities with above national levels and the gap narrowed for boys. For most pupil groups however, and those with EHCPs, SEN support and EAL the gap widened.

Decreased by Stayed same Increased by

KS2 Groups – Reading Writing Maths	Gap movement since 2019	Gap in 2023	Gap in 2022	Gap in 2019
All pupils	0	-2	-1	-2
Boys	1	-2	-2	-3
Girls	-1	-2	0	-1
Asian	-3	-4	-3	-1
Black	-6	-2	1	4
White	0	-8	-7	-8
Any other ethnic	-1	3	1	4
EHCP (Education Health Care Plan)	-1	-4	3	-3
SEN (SEN support in schools)	-7	-2	2	5
FSM (eligible for Free School Meals)	1	4	4	3
English (as first language)	1	-2	-2	-3
EAL (English as Additional Language)	-3	-3	-2	0

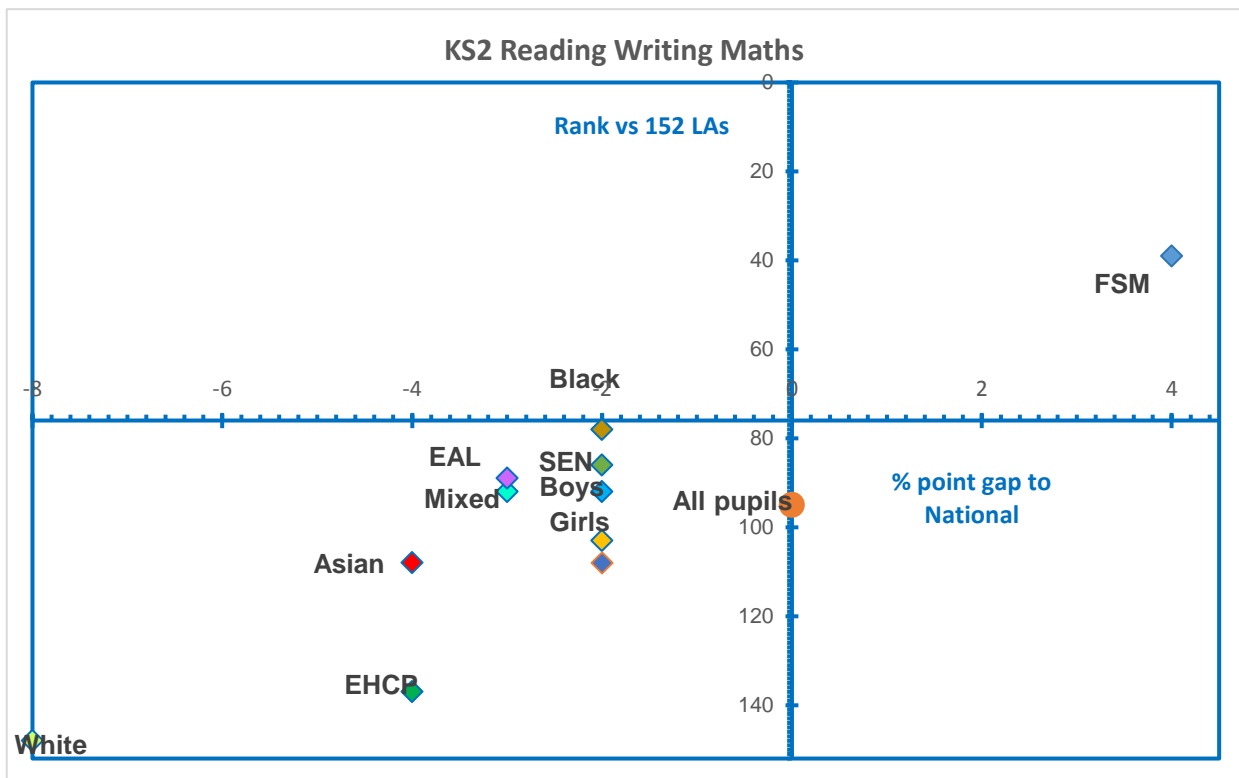


Figure 6 KS2 RWM Leicester gap to national and the 2023 rank

Children in Leicester's primary schools make better average progress than nationally in Mathematics and writing. For reading, the average progress is about the same as national average progress.

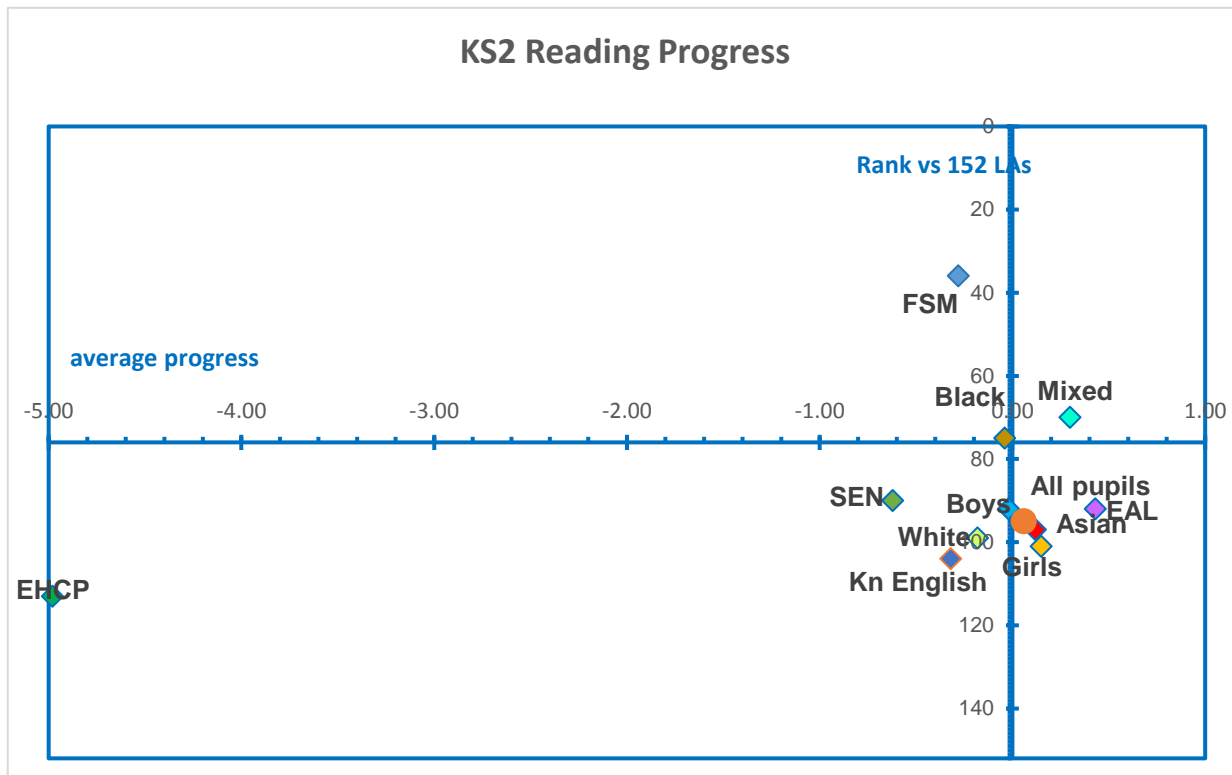


Figure 7 KS2 Reading Progress: Leicester average progress and the 2023 rank

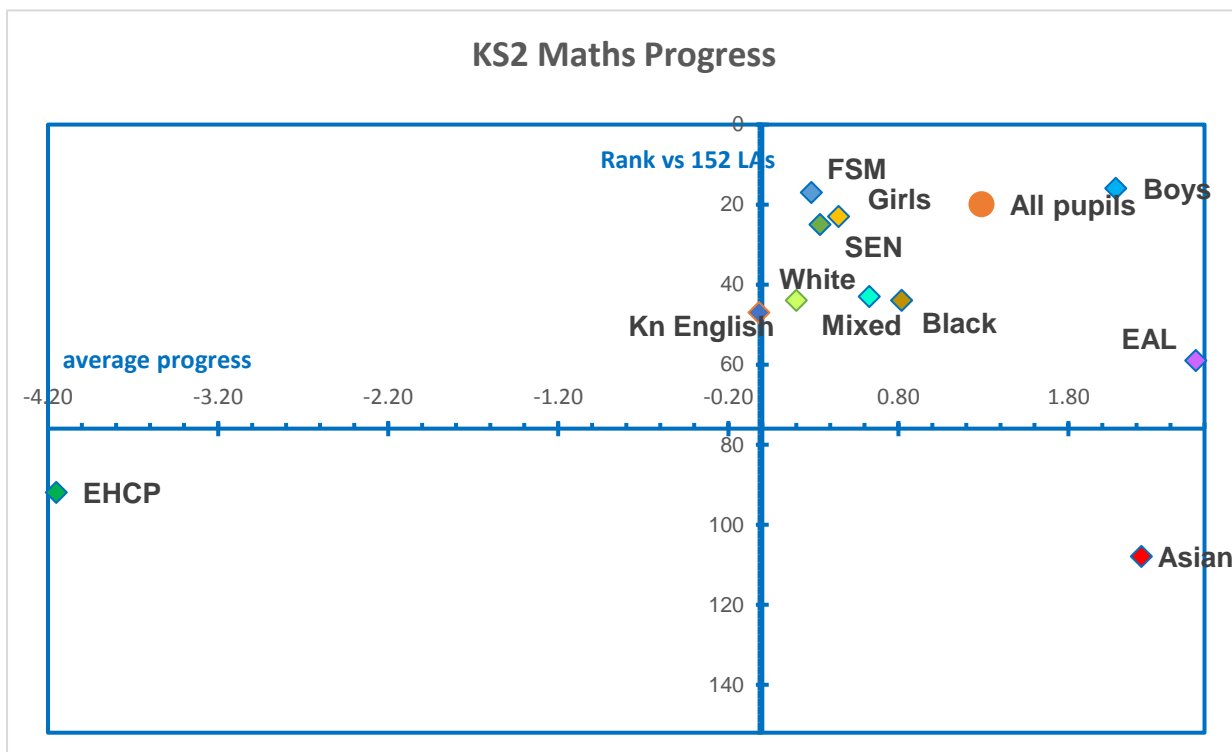


Figure 8 KS2 Mathematics Progress: Leicester average progress and the 2023 rank

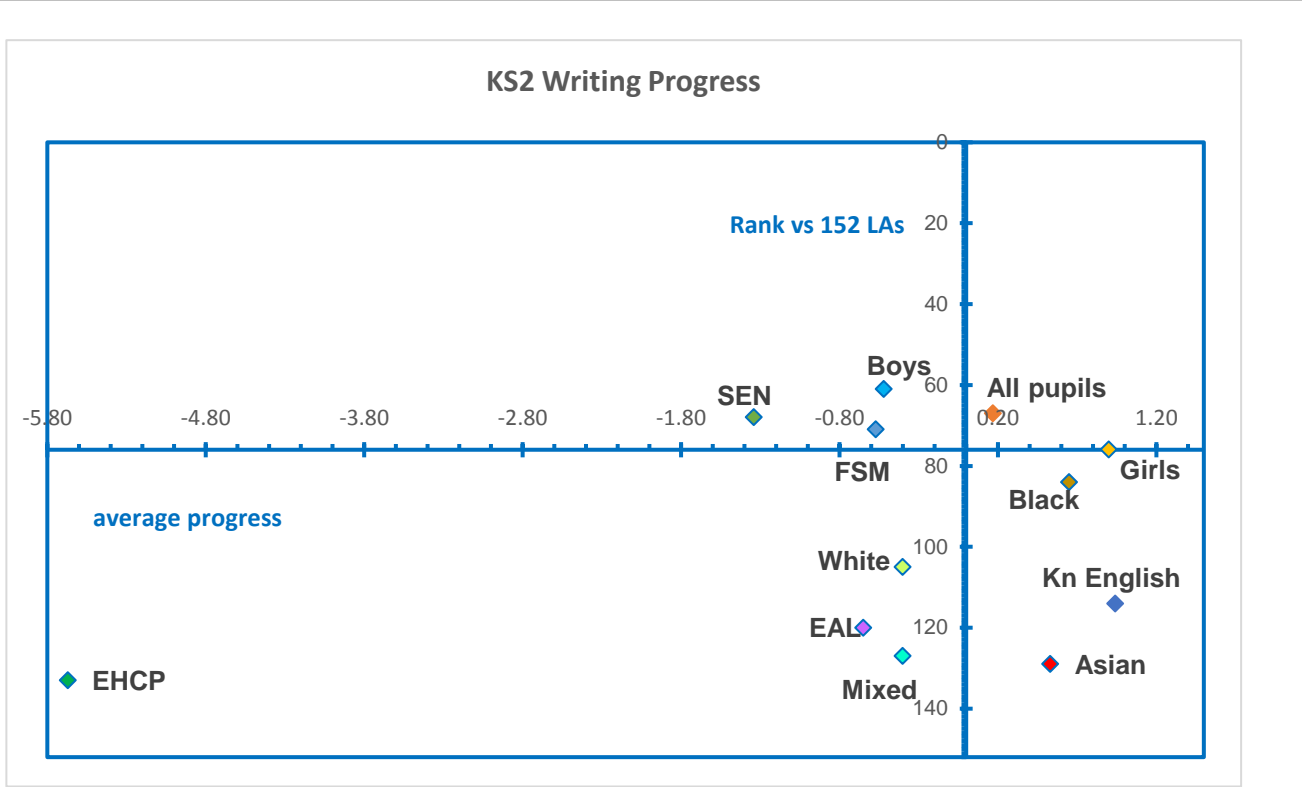


Figure 9 KS2 Writing Progress: Leicester average progress and the 2023 rank

1.5. Key Stage 4 – GCSE

- 1.5.1. The final statistical release from the DfE was in the first week of February 2024 (a little later than usual).
- 1.5.2. The results reported are for GCSE and other nationally recognised examinations taken either before or during year 11 (the year in which most children reach age 16). These results are reported for each school, local authority and nationally. The DfE results are published by school on the [DfE website](#). The DfE have published a reminder that given the unprecedented change in the way GCSE results were awarded in the summers of 2020 and 2021 (the uneven impact of the pandemic on school and college performance data during this period) and the changes to assessment methods in 2022, comparisons over time need to be treated with caution.

In June of every academic year, schools can apply for children who are new arrivals to be removed from the reported results. These are children who have arrived from overseas, from a country that does not use English as an official language, since the beginning of year 10.

There are many measures used to review aggregated results for children at the end of key stage 4. In this report the analysis focuses on the Attainment 8 score, the Progress 8 score and the Basics 9-5 measure. There is also mention of the proportion of children entering and achieving the English Baccalaureate (EBACC).

Attainment 8 is an average total score of up to 8 approved qualifications. Each qualification is allocated a score in line with the GCSE grades between 9 (high) and 1 (low). The qualifications that count in this measure must include English and mathematics, science, humanities and language and up to 3 other GCSE or approved technical qualifications. English and mathematics are double counted.

Progress 8 score is a calculation of the average progress pupils made across the 8 qualifications between the end of key stage 2 (average of reading and mathematics

scores) and the end of key stage 4 compared to other children with the same starting points. Only 88% of pupils in the 2023 GCSE cohort had results at the end of key stage 2. This is normally because they were not in the country at the time of the key stage 2 assessments. Therefore, these pupils are not included in the progress measures.

The Basics 9-5 measure is the proportion of children who achieved both English and mathematics GCSE at grade 5 and above

The EBACC measure is the proportion of children who have achieved at least a grade 5 (or grade 4) at GCSE in each of English, mathematics, a science, a modern language and a humanities subject.

The DfE remind us that we need to be cautious considering comparisons over time due to changes in approach to grading and methods of assessment between 2022 and 2023. Performance was expected to be lower in 2023 than in 2022. The more meaningful comparison is with 2019 which is the last year that summer exams were taken before the pandemic. 2023 saw a return to pre-pandemic grading, with some protections. Changes seen in the headline attainment statistics likely reflect the changes in approach to grading in different years and the methodology change in calculating measures rather than changes in standards.

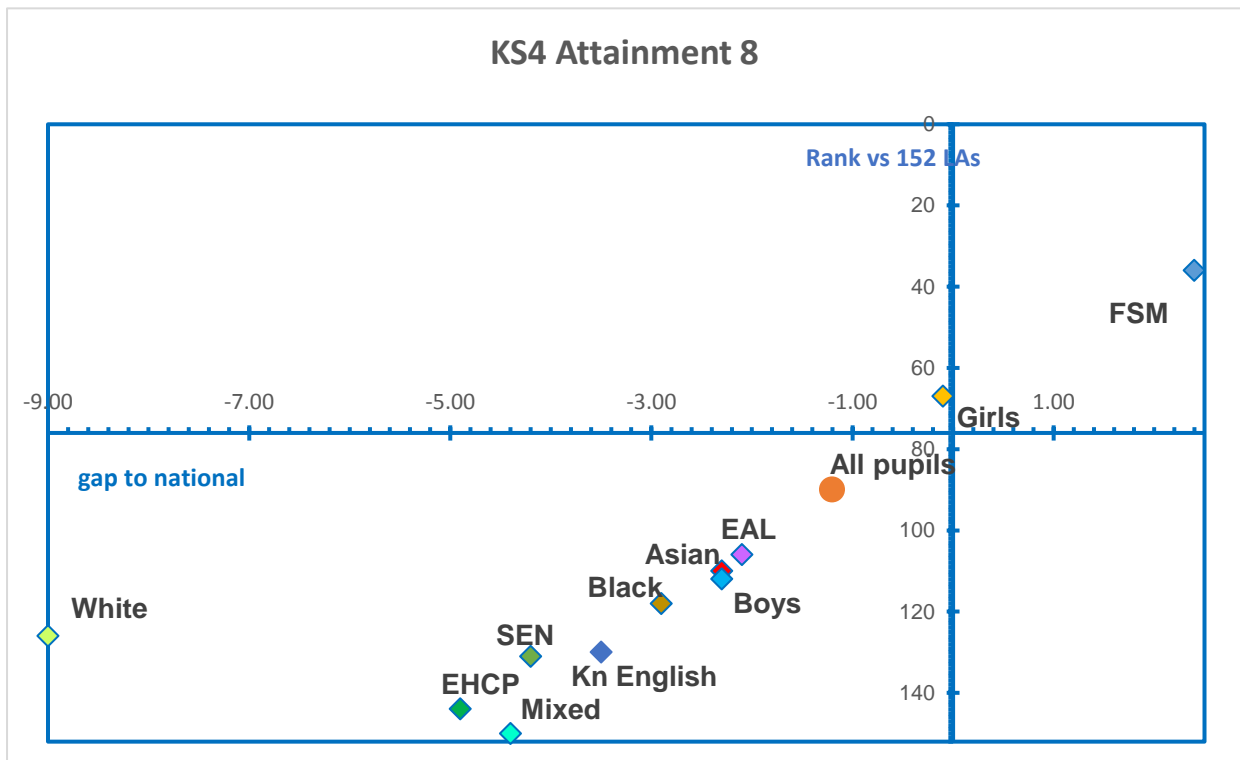


Figure 10: KS4 Attainment 8 gap to national by group and the 2023 rank.

1.5.3. In 2023 the Attainment 8 score for children in Leicester was 45.1, closing the gap for the second year, to the national figure of 46.4. Compared to other local authorities Leicester's rank is now 90 out of 152, an improvement from 117 in 2022.

The proportion of pupils achieving Basic 9-5 in Leicester did not improve from 2022 (44.7%) to 2023 (41.9%). However, nationally this also fell - and by a larger degree compared to Leicester - by 4.5%points to 45.5%. Progress (progress 8) for children in Leicester from their Key Stage 2 starting point was 0.14. This was

better than in 2022 (0.07) and better than nationally (-0.03). This gave a rank of 36 against the 152 local authorities.

There was an increase of 1% point from 37% to 38% in the proportion of children entering the full range of subjects for the EBACC (rank improved from 137 [2019] to 79 [2022] and remains at 79 [2023]). 16.6% of children attained grade 5 and above in the 5 different areas compared to 17.1% nationally.

Girls both in Leicester and nationally still outperform boys in GCSE. However, the gap between boys and girls in Leicester closed slightly in 2022 and again in 2023 (excepting % EBacc 9-5). Local authority ranks for both boys and girls across all of the measures have improved, except for girls for %Basics 9-4 and % who entered EBacc which dropped to 114 and 70 LAs respectively.

1.5.4. Children of White heritage still perform least well across all Key Stage 4 measures with an average attainment 8 score of 36.2 (which is less than a grade 4 on average across all the 8 included qualifications). This is 1.2%points worse than the score in 2022. This group of pupils also had a progress measure of -0.56 which is a slight improvement from 2022. The local authority rank for white pupils in each measure was 150 for Attainment 8 and 143 for Progress 8.

Asian pupils still performed the best across all measures in 2023 with an Attainment 8 score of 51.2 and Progress 8 score of 0.65. This gave ranks of 110 and 79 respectively.

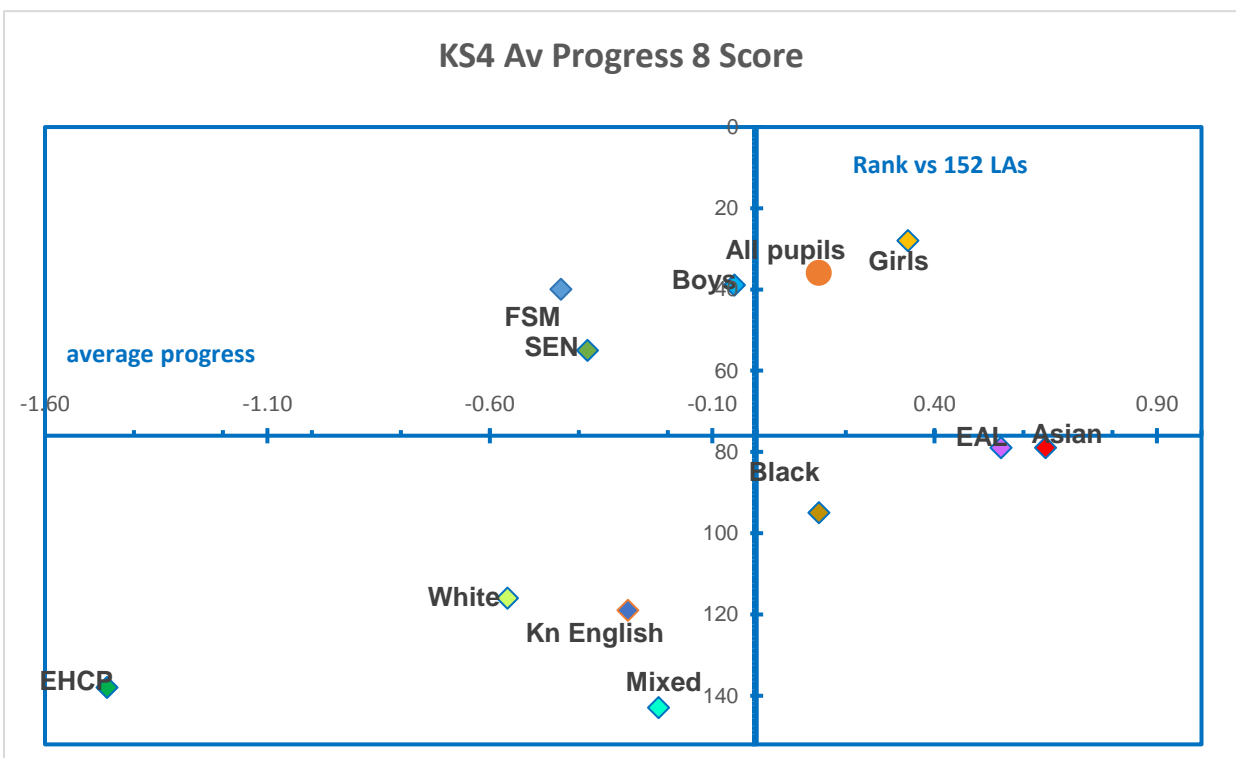


Figure 11 Average Progress 8 score by group and the 2023 rank.

1.5.5. Children who completed key stage 4 in 2023 with an Education Health Care Plan do significantly less well than their peers on these measures and compared to the previous year's cohort. The only measure with slight improvement was in the progress 8 score. The proportion of children achieving the Basic 9-4 decreased (greater drop than national) to 7.3%. Progress made by young people with an EHCP was better in 2023 (-1.46) compared to 2022 (-1.71). This led to a better ranking of 138 out of 152 local authorities.

Of the children who have SEN support in schools 15% achieved Basics 9-5 and a further 10% had both English and mathematics at a grade 4. The Attainment 8 score dropped to 29.1 and progress improved to -0.38. At a ranking of 55, this was above the progress made in 97 other LAs from the same starting points.

- 1.5.6.** Children who are eligible for FSM still had better outcomes across all measures in 2023 (now with a higher proportion entering EBacc) than in 2022 and in 2019. Outcomes are better for this group nationally and ranks show that Leicester's performance has stayed in the top third of all local authorities. This is an improvement on the results for 2022 and 2019.

For those who are not eligible for free school meals the Attainment 8 score of 47.9 is below an average of grade 5 across all 8 qualifications. This is a drop from 2022 (less of a drop than national), but an improvement on the average of 4.5 in 2019. The rank for this measure and this group has increased from 113 to 101. The Progress 8 measure has improved to 0.36 from 0.31 in 2022 and 0.16 in 2021. Progress for this group is better than national in all but 24 other local authorities.

- 1.5.7.** Children with English as an Additional Language do better than those who speak English as their first language across all measures. This is the same as the national picture. Leicester's Attainment 8 score for those who are known to be English speakers is 42.4 (rank 130) compared to EAL children who achieved 47.3 (rank 106).

45.5% of children with EAL achieved grade 5 or better in both English and mathematics compared to only 37.4% of English speakers. There was a 5%point increase for those with EAL compared to 2019 but a 0.3%point decrease for English speakers.

- 1.5.8.** In summary at the end of Key stage 4, the results achieved by Leicester young people are below national across all measures, however the gap to national has narrowed this year compared to 2022.

Figure 11 for Attainment 8 shows that pupils of White heritage and those with an EHCP had a wider gap to their peers nationally and that the gap from national closed to Leicester's children eligible for FSM. Most groups closed the gap to national and improved their rankings, except for young people with EHCPs.

6. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

2.1. Financial implications

There are no financial implications directly associated with this report.

2.2. Legal implications

There are no legal implications directly associated with this report.

2.3. Equalities implications

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is a general duty that applies to schools, and other public bodies. It requires schools to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct, improve equality of

opportunity; and foster good relations between different groups of people: those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful for any education provider, including a private or independent provider, to discriminate between pupils on grounds of disability, race, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, or sex.

The report provides an insight into the results from the annual assessment measures for various stages of education. There are no direct equalities implications arising from the report as it is for noting. The 2023 results show that education outcomes in Leicester and nationally in primary school assessments are lower than before the pandemic. Outcomes for the end of primary (key stage 2) and the end of secondary (key stage 4) show that attainment have not bounced back as quickly as nationally. Moving forward it will be important to consider impacts on children who are more vulnerable, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, children from poorer backgrounds, and those who are Looked After. Children who have SEN including those with an EHCP do significantly worse than other pupils. The pandemic led to considerable disruption to the learning of pupils in the city. The Early Years Foundation Stage assessment sets the foundations for literacy and is crucial to children being able to move onto literacy in the national curriculum. In this report comparison of the 2023 results are made to those reported in 2022 and to the national (England) outcomes.

Overall attainment of all children in Leicester in all key stages is below national. The report shows that pupils of White heritage and those with an EHCP had a wider gap to their peers nationally

It would be useful to have monitoring of and research into the longer term effects of the disruption to learning of the pandemic in secondary as well as primary schools, to determine the extent to which targeted measures are effectively supporting the schools and pupils most affected.

Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

2.4. Climate Emergency implications

There are no significant climate emergency implications directly associated with this report.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

2.5. Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

7. Background information and other papers:

3.1. Useful links

- [Key stage 2 attainment, Academic Year 2022/23](#)
- [Secondary accountability measures](#)

8. Summary of appendices:

- 4.1. Tables of results for Early Years Foundation Stage
- 4.2. Tables of results for Phonics
- 4.3. Tables of results for Key Stage 1
- 4.4. Tables of results for Key Stage 2
- 4.5. Tables of results for Key Stage 4

9. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

10. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why?

No

4.1. Tables of results for Early Years Foundation Stage (provisional Nov 2023) showing the outcomes for each group and measure

All pupils and gender	2023						2022					
	Leicester			England			Leicester			England		
	All	Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls
Number of Pupils	4414	2271	2143	618891	316615	302276	4502	2294	2208	622583	318249	304334
% Communication and Language	64.1	57.3	71.3	68.8	62.3	75.6	61.7	55.8	67.7	67.1	60.8	73.6
% Good Level of Development	63.3	56.6	70.5	67.2	60.6	74.2	60.2	54.5	66.2	65.2	58.7	71.9

Major Ethnic groups 2023	2023									
	Leicester					England				
	Asian	Black	Mixed	White	Any other ethnic group	Asian	Black	Mixed	White	Any other ethnic group
Number of Pupils	2028	417	389	1251	133	75255	32825	46152	430226	20501
% Communication and Language	68.7	62.1	63.8	61.2	60.2	67.6	64.1	70.3	70.4	60.0
% Good Level of Development	68.1	61.2	62.7	60.3	60.2	66.7	62.8	68.7	68.6	59.1

Major Ethnic Groups 2022	2022									
	Leicester					England				
	Asian	Black	Mixed	White	Any other ethnic group	Asian	Black	Mixed	White	Any other ethnic group
Number of Pupils	2046	376	360	1433	126	74613	31183	45311	439484	13574
% Communication and Language	64.7	62.2	60.6	60.4	54.8	66.1	62.4	68.8	68.3	56.6
% Good Level of Development	63.7	60.1	58.1	58.8	53.2	64.9	60.6	67.0	66.3	55.3

SEN status	2023						2022					
	Leicester			England			Leicester			England		
SEN	EHC plan	SEN support	No SEN	EHC plan	SEN support	No SEN	EHC plan	SEN support	No SEN	EHC plan	SEN support	No SEN
Number of Pupils	81	411	3820	15620	54979	539561	67	382	3971	13630	49629	552523
% Communication and Language	2.5	20.4	71.3	4.9	27.1	75.5	3.0	18.8	67.7	5.0	25.8	72.8
% Good Level of Development	2.5	19.5	70.6	3.8	24.3	74.0	1.5	17.3	66.3	3.6	22.9	70.9

Free School Meals eligibility	2023				2022			
	Leicester		England		Leicester		England	
FSM	FSM Eligible	Not known to be FSM eligible	FSM Eligible	Not known to be FSM eligible	FSM Eligible	Not known to be FSM eligible	FSM Eligible	Not known to be FSM eligible
Number of Pupils	697	3528	109100	495247	732	3770	113882	508701
% Communication and Language	55.4	67.5	53.1	73.0	53.1	63.3	50.9	70.7
% Good Level of Development	54.4	66.9	51.6	71.5	51.6	61.9	49.1	68.8

First language	2023				2022			
	Leicester		England		Leicester		England	
Language	Known or believed to be English	Known or believed to be other than English	Known or believed to be English	Known or believed to be other than English	Known or believed to be English	Known or believed to be other than English	Known or believed to be English	Known or believed to be other than English
Number of Pupils	1896	2306	476814	123769	1947	2382	484926	121530
% Communication and Language	67.8	63.7	71.0	63.4	65.1	60.7	69.1	61.3
% Good Level of Development	66.8	63.2	69.3	62.4	63.3	59.8	67.1	60.1

Tables of results for Phonics showing the outcomes for each group and measure

All pupils and gender	2023						2022					
	Leicester			England			Leicester			England		
	All	Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls
Number of pupils	4612	2370	2242	632660	324168	308492	4651	2350	2301	638014	326420	311594
% Met Standard	75	72	78	79	76	82	72	69	76	75	72	79

Major Ethnic group	2023											
	Leicester						England					
	2023	Asian	Black	Mixed	White	Any other ethnic group	Unclassified	Asian	Black	Mixed	White	Any other ethnic group
Number of pupils	2108	417	365	1431	120	171	79567	34727	46357	441079	14699	16231
% Met Standard	78	79	73	73	71	50	82	78	81	79	75	57

Major Ethnic group	2022											
	Leicester						England					
	2022	Asian	Black	Mixed	White	Any other ethnic group	Unclassified	Asian	Black	Mixed	White	Any other ethnic group
Number of pupils	2145	399	394	1453	102	158	76623	32613	45115	454034	13760	15869
% Met Standard	74	77	72	71	62	49	79	76	77	76	71	54

SEN Status	2023						2022					
	Leicester			England			Leicester			England		
SEN	EHC plan	SEN support	No SEN	EHC plan	SEN support	No SEN	EHC plan	SEN support	No SEN	EHC plan	SEN support	No SEN
Number of pupils	125	474	3916	20141	72474	532768	135	484	3951	18479	69721	543352
% Met Standard	15	45	82	20	48	86	9	43	79	19	44	82

Free School meals eligibility	2023				2022			
	Leicester		England		Leicester		England	
FSM	FSM Eligible	Not known to be FSM eligible	FSM Eligible	Not known to be FSM eligible	FSM Eligible	Not known to be FSM eligible	FSM Eligible	Not known to be FSM eligible
Number of pupils	954	3658	140005	492655	1112	3539	161656	496358
% Met Standard	67	77	66	82	66	74	62	79

First Language	2023				2022			
	Leicester		England		Leicester		England	
Language	Known or believed to be English	Known or believed to be other than English	Known or believed to be English	Known or believed to be other than English	Known or believed to be English	Known or believed to be other than English	Known or believed to be English	Known or believed to be other than English
Number of pupils	1980	2526	489446	133958	2023	2530	501310	496358
% Met Standard	78	75	80	78	73	73	76	75

Tables of results for Key Stage 1 showing the outcomes for each group and measure

NOTE: 2023 is the last time KS1 assessments are statutory

All pupils and gender	2023						2022					
	Leicester			England			Leicester			England		
All KS1	All	Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls
Number of pupils	4819	2440	2379	648936	331787	317149	4738	2430	2308	639885	328204	311681
% Reading expected	63	59	67	68	65	72	61	57	65	67	63	71
% Writing expected	56	50	63	60	54	66	54	47	61	58	52	64
% Maths expected	67	66	68	70	71	70	64	64	65	68	68	67

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Major Ethnic group	2023									
	Leicester					England				
Ethnicity	Asian	Black	Mixed	White	Any other ethnic group	Asian	Black	Mixed	White	Any other ethnic group
Number of pupils	2228	451	405	1460	110	81555	35981	46095	456088	14704
% Reading expected	65	69	64	60	56	70	69	71	68	59
% Writing expected	60	62	55	52	49	64	61	62	60	53
% Maths expected	70	71	70	65	57	73	68	71	71	65

Major Ethnic Group	2022									
	Leicester					England				
Ethnicity	Asian	Black	Mixed	White	Any other ethnic group	Asian	Black	Mixed	White	Any other ethnic group
Number of pupils	2146	399	358	1548	148	76821	33306	44670	457498	13998
% Reading expected	64	63	64	58	66	69	67	70	67	59
% Writing expected	59	58	55	48	56	62	59	60	57	52
% Maths expected	69	62	66	61	66	71	64	69	68	62

SEN Status	2023						2022					
	Leicester			England			Leicester			England		
SEN	EHC plan	SEN support	No SEN	EHC plan	SEN support	No SEN	EHC plan	SEN support	No SEN	EHC plan	SEN support	No SEN
Number of pupils	166	585	3975	23017	85487	534365	136	562	3961	20637	82271	531344
% Reading expected	6	31	71	12	32	77	7	29	68	12	30	75
% Writing expected	4	23	64	8	22	69	3	21	61	7	20	66
% Maths expected	8	39	75	15	37	79	10	33	72	14	33	75

Free School Meals eligibility	2023				2022			
	Leicester		England		Leicester		England	
	FSM Eligible	Not known to be FSM eligible	FSM Eligible	Not known to be FSM eligible	FSM Eligible	Not known to be FSM eligible	FSM Eligible	Not known to be FSM eligible
Number of pupils	1232	3587	157943	490993	1174	3564	153408	486477
% Reading expected	55	66	54	73	52	64	51	72
% Writing expected	46	60	44	65	44	57	41	63
% Maths expected	59	70	56	75	54	68	52	73

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First Language	2023				2022			
	Leicester		England		Leicester		England	
	Known or believed to be English	Known or believed to be other than English	Known or believed to be English	Known or believed to be other than English	Known or believed to be English	Known or believed to be other than English	Known or believed to be English	Known or believed to be other than English
Number of pupils	2039	2677	503077	138590	1965	2681	501120	131909
% Reading expected	67	61	70	65	64	60	68	64
% Writing expected	57	57	61	58	54	55	58	57
% Maths expected	68	68	71	69	66	65	68	67

4.2. Tables of results for Key Stage 2 showing the outcomes for each group and measure

All pupils and gender	2023						2022					
	Leicester			England			Leicester			England		
	All	Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls
All KS2	4992	2576	2416	667692	340987	326705	4892	2521	2371	661540	338571	322969
Number of pupils	4992	2576	2416	667692	340987	326705	4892	2521	2371	661540	338571	322969
% RWM expected	58	55	61	60	57	63	58	53	63	59	55	63
% Reading expected	69	67	71	73	71	76	73	68	78	75	70	80
Ave Reading prog sc	0.06	-0.02	0.15	0.04	-0.21	0.29	0.57	-0.07	1.25	0.04	-0.75	0.86
% Maths expected	74	74	74	73	74	73	73	74	72	72	73	71
Ave Maths prog sc	1.29	2.08	0.45	0.04	0.82	-0.77	1.27	2.18	0.32	0.04	0.83	-0.79
% Writing expected	70	64	76	72	65	78	68	61	75	70	63	77
Ave Writing prog sc	0.17	-0.52	0.90	0.04	-0.76	0.87	0.32	-0.46	1.15	0.05	-0.77	0.89

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Major Ethnic group	2023											
	Leicester						England					
	2023	Asian	Black	Mixed	White	Any other ethnic group	Unclassified	Asian	Black	Mixed	White	Any other ethnic group
Number of pupils	2281	487	387	1626	126	85	83206	38934	43739	478952	14207	8654
% RWM expected	63	58	60	51	60	49	67	60	62	59	57	47
% Reading expected	71	70	75	64	68	65	76	72	75	73	67	62
Ave Reading prog sc	0.12	-0.04	0.30	-0.18	1.48	0.89	0.41	-0.04	0.28	-0.05	0.63	0.11
% Maths expected	79	77	74	66	79	71	83	74	74	72	75	62
Ave Maths prog sc	2.23	0.82	0.63	0.20	3.43	1.43	2.49	0.29	0.01	-0.42	2.29	-0.12
% Writing expected	75	69	72	62	72	58	78	73	74	71	69	59
Ave Writing prog sc	0.53	0.65	-0.40	-0.40	1.34	0.77	1.12	0.68	0.25	-0.22	1.37	-0.20

Major Ethnic Group	2022											
	Leicester						England					
2022	Asian	Black	Mixed	White	Any other ethnic group	Unclassified	Asian	Black	Mixed	White	Any other ethnic group	Unclassified
Number of pupils	2140	465	366	1736	125	60	78275	37762	42320	481541	13787	7855
% RWM expected	64	61	59	51	58	40	67	60	61	58	57	48
% Reading expected	78	75	77	67	67	56	79	76	77	74	70	64
Ave Reading prog sc	0.93	0.99	0.41	0.17	-0.21	-1.06	0.93	0.46	0.42	-0.18	0.90	-0.10
% Maths expected	80	73	70	65	70	52	81	71	72	71	73	62
Ave Maths prog sc	2.33	0.86	-0.03	0.42	1.50	0.15	2.17	0.05	-0.04	-0.33	2.18	-0.31
% Writing expected	72	71	69	61	68	48	75	71	72	69	66	58
Ave Writing prog sc	0.42	1.23	-0.08	0.08	0.66	-0.94	1.07	0.57	0.32	-0.19	1.22	-0.27

SEN status	2023						2022					
	Leicester			England			Leicester			England		
SEN	EHC plan	SEN support	No SEN	EHC plan	SEN support	No SEN	EHC plan	SEN support	No SEN	EHC plan	SEN support	No SEN
Number of pupils	234	660	4074	32026	104640	528490	165	748	3954	29590	101225	528626
% RWM expected	4	22	67	8	24	70	10	23	67	7	21	69
% Reading expected	11	39	77	18	45	82	15	41	82	16	44	84
Ave Reading prog sc	-4.98	-0.62	0.49	-4.36	-0.58	0.42	-3.09	-0.47	0.94	-4.50	-1.17	0.51
% Maths expected	11	44	83	16	42	83	16	41	81	15	40	81
Ave Maths prog sc	-4.15	0.34	1.79	-4.12	-0.84	0.45	-1.65	0.42	1.58	-3.88	-0.91	0.43
% Writing expected	5	31	80	12	34	83	12	30	77	10	30	81
Ave Writing prog sc	-5.67	-1.34	0.78	-4.41	-1.53	0.62	-2.79	-1.00	0.73	-4.11	-1.55	0.58

Free School meals eligibility	2023				2022			
	Leicester		England		Leicester		England	
	FSM	FSM Eligible	Not known to be FSM eligible	FSM Eligible	Not known to be FSM eligible	FSM Eligible	Not known to be FSM eligible	FSM Eligible
Number of pupils	1463	3529	182028	485664	1417	3475	166837	494703
% RWM expected	48	62	44	66	46	63	42	65
% Reading expected	60	73	60	78	63	77	62	80
Ave Reading prog sc	-0.28	0.21	-0.88	0.38	-0.16	0.88	-0.88	0.35
% Maths expected	64	78	59	79	60	78	55	77
Ave Maths prog sc	0.29	1.73	-1.06	0.45	-0.02	1.82	-1.22	0.46
% Writing expected	60	74	58	77	57	72	54	75
Ave Writing prog sc	-0.57	0.49	-0.69	0.32	-0.16	0.53	-0.80	0.33

First Language	2023				2022			
	Leicester		England		Leicester		England	
	Language	Known or believed to be English	Known or believed to be other than English	Known or believed to be English	Known or believed to be other than English	Known or believed to be English	Known or believed to be other than English	Known or believed to be other than English
Number of pupils	2279	2679	520468	143968	2312	2548	520079	138692
% RWM expected	57	59	59	62	56	60	58	62
% Reading expected	70	68	74	71	72	74	75	75
Ave Reading prog sc	-0.32	0.43	-0.09	0.57	0.18	0.98	-0.16	0.88
% Maths expected	71	77	72	78	69	77	71	76
Ave Maths prog sc	-0.02	2.55	-0.50	2.26	0.23	2.35	-0.43	2.01
% Writing expected	68	71	72	73	67	69	69	71
Ave Writing prog sc	-0.65	0.94	-0.26	1.28	-0.10	0.75	-0.22	1.16

4.3. Tables of results for Key Stage 4 showing the outcomes for each group and measure

All pupils and gender	2023						2022					
	Leicester			England			Leicester			England		
	Gender	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys
Number of pupils	4326	2213	2113	603613	308635	294978	4139	2137	2002	585201	299047	286154
Average Att 8	45.1	41.9	48.6	46.4	44.2	48.7	46.3	42.8	50.0	48.9	46.4	51.5
% Basics 9-5	41.9	38.5	45.4	45.5	43.4	47.6	44.7	40.3	49.3	50.0	47.2	52.8
% Basics 9-4	60.0	56.1	64.0	65.4	63.0	67.8	63.7	58.7	68.9	69.0	66.4	71.7
% entered EBacc	38.1	32.1	44.5	39.4	35.0	44.0	37.3	30.8	44.2	38.8	34.0	43.9
% EBacc 9-5	16.6	11.3	22.1	17.1	13.9	20.4	17.3	13.0	22.0	20.4	16.6	24.3
% EBacc 9-4	23.4	17.5	29.6	24.3	20.3	28.5	24.2	18.1	30.7	26.9	22.2	31.8
EBacc APS	4.0	3.6	4.3	4.1	3.9	4.3	4.1	3.8	4.5	4.3	4.1	4.5
Avg P8 Score	0.14	-0.05	0.34	-0.03	-0.17	0.12	0.07	-0.17	0.33	-0.03	-0.21	0.15

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Major Ethnic Group	2023											
	Leicester						England					
Ethnicity	Asian	Black	Mixed	White	Other	Unclassified	Asian	Black	Mixed	White	Other	Unclassified
Number of pupils	2109	478	299	1258	126	56	72462	37702	36545	432750	12319	11835
Average Att 8	51.2	43.9	42.5	36.2	44.4	41.8	53.5	46.8	46.9	45.2	48.8	42.4
% Basics 9-5	53.2	36.8	35.8	26.3	41.3	41.1	59.0	45.7	45.7	43.2	49.4	40.1
% Basics 9-4	71.7	55.6	52.5	43.6	60.3	60.7	75.5	65.5	65.1	63.8	67.3	58.8
% entered EBacc	50.4	31.0	33.1	21.5	39.7	37.5	53.3	47.0	42.2	35.8	54.1	36.3
% EBacc 9-5	23.5	11.1	12.4	8.7	13.5	8.9	26.2	16.5	18.5	15.4	22.8	14.9
% EBacc 9-4	32.2	16.5	17.4	13.0	21.4	23.2	34.8	25.0	26.0	22.2	32.5	21.2
EBacc APS	4.6	3.8	3.7	3.0	3.9	3.7	4.8	4.1	4.1	3.9	4.5	3.7
Avg P8 Score	0.65	0.14	-0.22	-0.56	0.20	0.06	0.53	0.22	-0.04	-0.14	0.53	-0.28

Major Ethnic Group	2022											
	Leicester						England					
2022	Asian	Black	Mixed	White	Other	Unclassified	Asian	Black	Mixed	White	Other	Unclassified
Number of pupils	1985	478	284	1246	83	57	66113	35754	33926	424649	11504	10880
Average Att 8	52.2	46.1	43.5	37.4	43.5	49.6	55.0	48.9	49.5	47.9	51.0	43.0
% Basics 9-5	56.2	42.9	37.7	29.3	32.5	43.9	62.1	49.8	50.0	48.0	54.0	42.5
% Basics 9-4	74.8	66.3	56.7	46.2	59.0	73.7	77.8	69.4	68.7	67.7	70.9	59.8
% entered EBacc	47.2	33.1	37.3	21.9	50.6	42.1	51.6	47.0	42.1	35.5	52.9	33.9
% EBacc 9-5	24.7	11.9	15.8	8.1	15.7	15.8	28.5	20.5	22.4	18.7	26.1	16.7
% EBacc 9-4	32.8	20.9	21.5	12.0	28.9	19.3	36.1	29.2	29.2	24.8	34.3	22.5
EBacc APS	4.7	4.0	3.8	3.2	4.1	4.3	4.9	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.7	3.8
Avg P8 Score	0.59	-0.02	-0.30	-0.63	0.32	0.57	0.54	0.18	-0.04	-0.14	0.54	-0.39

SEN Status	2023						2022					
	Leicester			England			Leicester			England		
SEN	SEN State EHC	SEN supp	No SEN	SEN State EHC	SEN supp	No SEN	SEN State EHC	SEN supp	No SEN	SEN State EHC	SEN supp	No SEN
Number of pupils	178	427	3721	26992	73060	502309	203	430	3506	24851	67483	491512
Average Att 8	9.1	29.1	48.7	14.0	33.3	50.2	10.9	29.8	50.3	14.3	34.9	52.6
% Basics 9-5	1.7	15.0	46.9	6.9	20.7	51.3	2.5	16.0	50.6	7.0	22.5	56.0
% Basics 9-4	7.3	25.1	66.5	13.0	36.9	72.4	9.4	27.0	71.3	13.5	39.2	76.1
% entered EBacc	0.0	13.8	42.8	4.3	19.2	44.3	3.4	16.5	41.8	4.1	17.8	43.6
% EBacc 9-5	0.0	2.3	19.0	1.2	5.0	19.7	0.5	3.7	20.0	1.3	5.8	23.4
% EBacc 9-4	0.0	3.0	26.9	1.8	7.9	28.0	1.0	6.3	27.7	2.0	8.5	30.7
EBacc APS	0.6	2.4	4.3	1.1	2.8	4.4	0.8	2.5	4.5	1.1	2.9	4.6
Avg P8 Score	-1.46	-0.38	0.29	-1.12	-0.45	0.10	-1.71	-0.62	0.28	-1.33	-0.47	0.10

Free School Meals eligibility	2023				2022			
	Leicester		England		Leicester		England	
FSM	FSM	FSM all other	FSM	FSM all other	FSM	FSM all other	FSM	FSM all other
Number of pupils	1123	3203	136049	467564	1042	3097	121301	463900
Average Att 8	37.3	47.9	34.9	49.8	36.8	49.5	37.0	52.0
% Basics 9-5	28.3	46.6	25.0	51.5	29.6	49.8	28.5	55.6
% Basics 9-4	45.3	65.1	43.2	71.8	45.7	69.7	47.1	74.7
% entered EBacc	29.5	41.2	27.5	42.9	25.1	41.4	26.2	42.1
% EBacc 9-5	8.5	19.4	7.2	19.9	9.7	19.9	8.9	23.4
% EBacc 9-4	14.4	26.6	11.8	27.9	14.2	27.5	13.5	30.4
EBacc APS	3.2	4.2	3.0	4.4	3.1	4.4	3.1	4.6
Avg P8 Score	-0.44	0.36	-0.58	0.13	-0.59	0.31	-0.59	0.11

First Language	2023				2022			
	Leicester		England		Leicester		England	
Language	English	Other than English	English	Other than English	English	Other than English	English	Other than English
Number of pupils	1952	2367	494562	105046	1837	2287	484117	97792
Average Att 8	42.4	47.3	45.9	49.4	41.7	50.0	48.5	51.4
% Basics 9-5	37.4	45.5	44.6	50.2	37.9	50.2	49.2	54.4
% Basics 9-4	55.7	63.4	64.9	68.3	56.3	69.6	68.6	71.7
% entered EBacc	32.0	43.3	36.7	52.3	28.35	44.5	36.4	51.4
% EBacc 9-5	12.9	19.6	16.0	22.6	12.0	21.7	19.4	25.2
% EBacc 9-4	18.8	27.3	22.9	31.4	17.6	29.5	25.6	33.5
EBacc APS	3.6	4.2	4.0	4.5	3.6	4.5	4.2	4.6
Avg P8 Score	-0.29	0.55	-0.12	0.51	-0.49	0.60	-0.12	0.55

Annual Education Performance Report – Academic Year 2022/2023

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2020 onwards has been turbulent in terms of national assessments so we have compared how outcomes have changed since 2019 as well as post pandemic

This annual report shows performance for Children in different groupings:
Overall, Boys, Girls, Heritage, EHCP, SEND, English as an additional language

Changes in the Educational Landscape

Significant changes in the role of the Local Authority over the last 5 years

Decentralisation of School Management

We do not “step into the classroom”

Education Funding

Placement Sufficiency and Standards

School performance/School Improvement

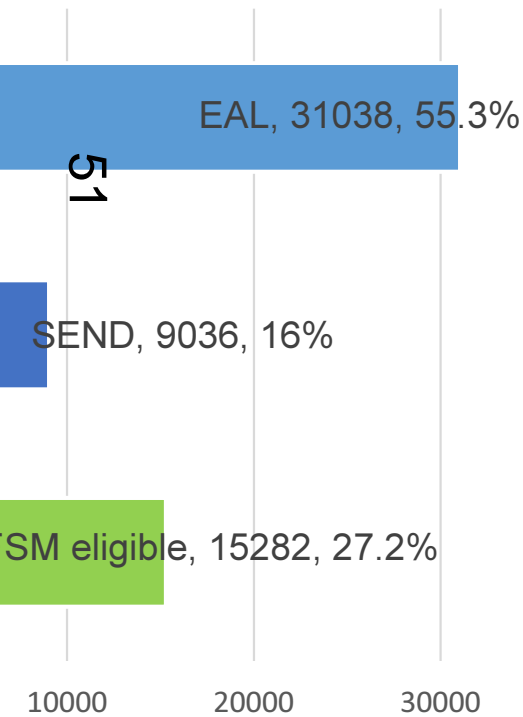
Education welfare

Inclusion and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Support

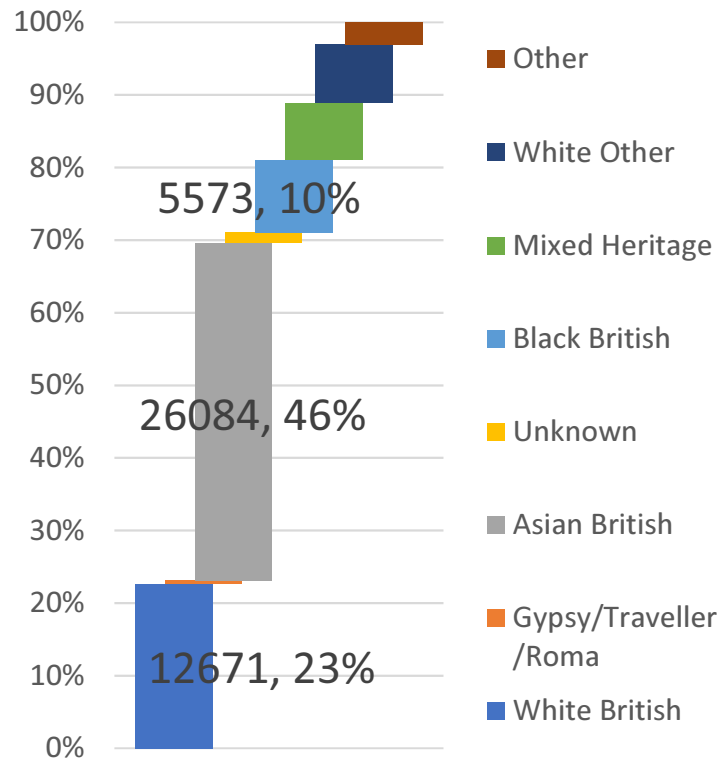
Profile of 56,100 children in Leicester Primary, Secondary and Special Schools

Proportion of Groups

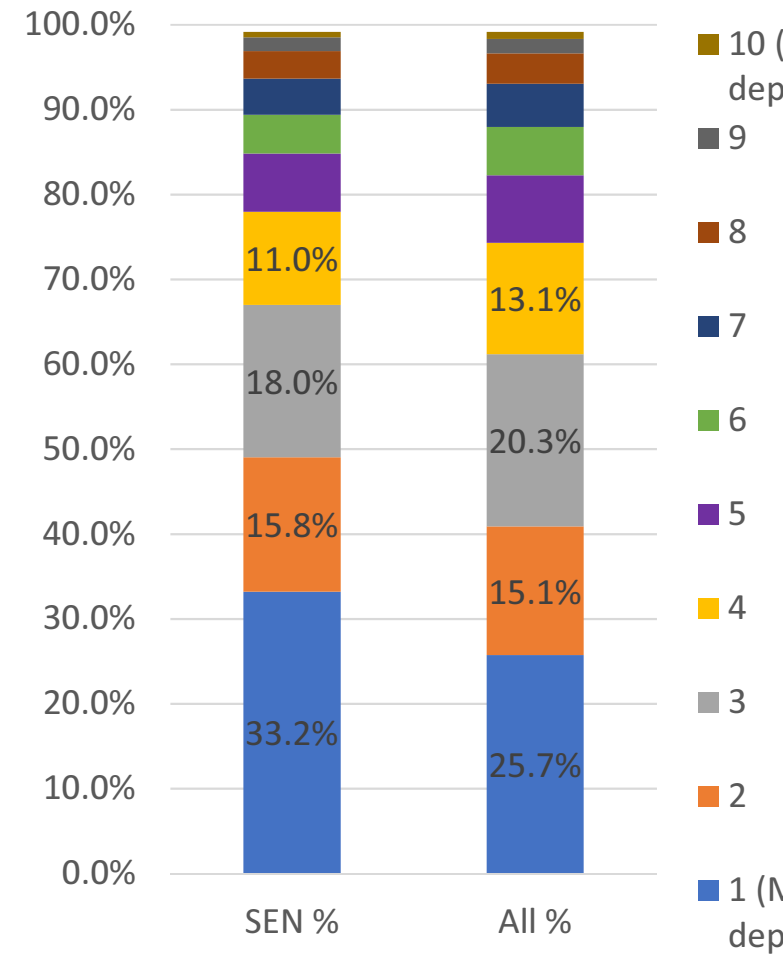
English as an additional language
 – Special Educational Needs & Disability
 Free school meal



Ethnicity



All and SEND pupils by deprivation



Leicester City children: What is going well

The gap to national for **Early Years Foundation Stage** pupils to achieve a Good Level of Development (GLD) is closing

A greater percentage of Asian heritage children met GLD

At the end of Yr6, a higher proportion of pupils met expected standard in maths than national. But the gap closed in 2023

At KS2, children of Black heritage outperformed national peers with 77% meeting expected standards of mathematics compared to 74%

Progress scores for children of black, of mixed and of any other ethnic group were above national in Maths

Progress scores for children of mixed heritage were above national in Reading

Results achieved by our secondary schools show that progress overall progress compared to national was better and the attainment gap closed

Leicester Children eligible for **Free School Meals** perform better than their peers nationally

at all key stages (larger groupings of FSM eligible children in school create environment with lower differentiation)

Leicester City children: What is not going so well

White heritage children do worse than the rest of the country for school readiness

Only 2/3 of children were ready for school

Phonics test (to check whether a child is on track to become a fluent reader) shows Leicester children have not made the recovery from 2019 as quickly as nationally, but did close the gap in 2023 (now 138 out of 152 LAs)

Children are still at a lower starting point compared to nationally as they enter **KS2**

Outcomes for children at the end of primary (KS2) and the end of secondary (KS4)

show that attainment has not bounced back as quickly as nationally

Unlike previous years, Leicester's school children did not make better progress than national at the end of KS2, except in Mathematics

At the end of KS4, the results achieved are below national across all measures, however the gap to national has narrowed this year compared to 2022

Ranking for all measures for those with EHCP has dropped from top half to the middle/bottom half compared to all local authorities

Children with EHCPs still do worse than other children including those with SEN support

Leicester City children: Considerations

Two-fifths of the disadvantage gap that has emerged by the time children take their GCSEs is attributable to their early years

Ongoing impact of the pandemic on children's communication, and personal, social and emotional development, with Leicester's extended lockdown

Mathematics least affected by speech, easier to teach remotely

Schools working hard to address the challenges of developing sustained writing, following the impact of remote learning/ pandemic closures

Poor Progress measures compared to national, due to arrivals in part

School's individual health profiles provided by Public Health for the last academic year show: demographic, health, deprivation, vaccination uptake etc for each and overall

Early Years: School readiness

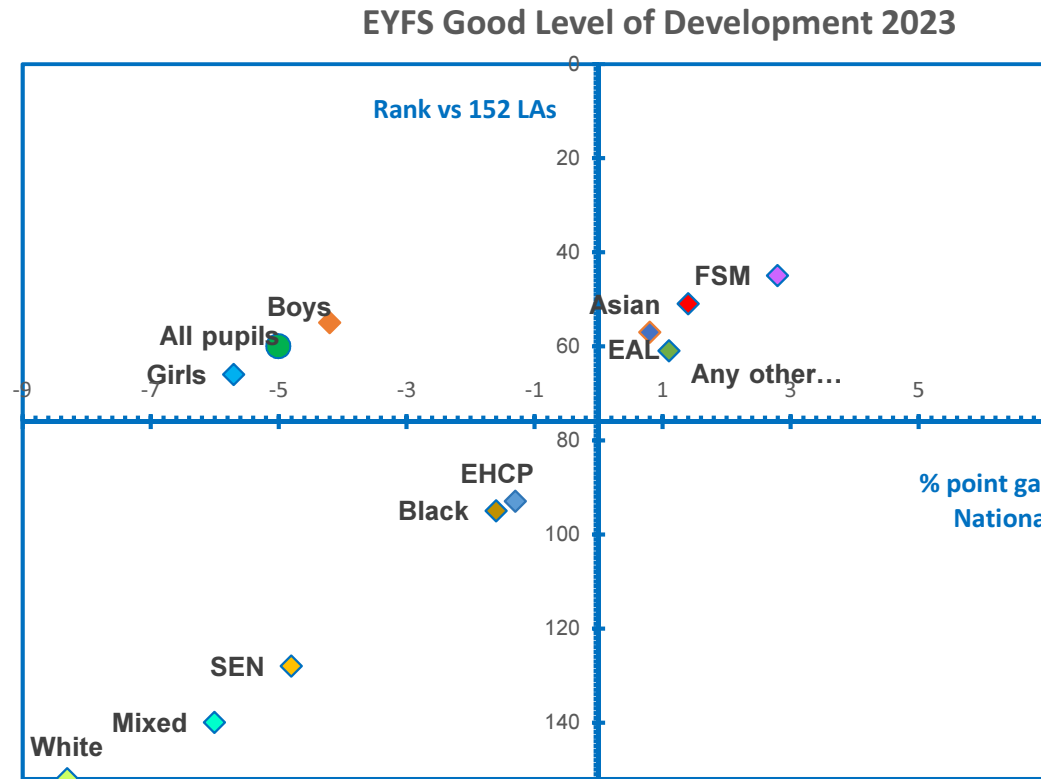
In 2023, Leicester children made more of an improvement to meet GLD and closed the gap to national

Asian heritage, English as an additional language and children eligible for Free School Meals do better than their national peers

Pupils of black and mixed heritage are closing the gap

But Leicester has the lowest percentage of white heritage pupils achieving GLD

Only 2/3 of Leicester children were ready for school



Key Stage 1 : Reading Writing and Mathematics

This is the final year that these assessments are statutory - Reception

Baseline Assessment will take the place to measure primary stage progress

Boys do not do as well as national peers or as well as Leicester girls

Children of white heritage still perform less well than other groups across

all 3 subjects

All pupil attainment in Leicester's schools at the end of key stage 1

compared to national has improved from 2022 and is now at the same gap

to national as in 2019

- The gap to national for black heritage, white heritage and children with an EHCP has narrowed since 2019

Although there has been some improvement and closing of the gap for

many of the groups, children are still at a lower starting point compared to

their peers nationally as they enter KS2

Key Stage 2: Reading, Writing and Mathematics

2023 outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils with FSM lie in the top 30% of all local authorities with above national levels

8% of children in Leicester reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in 2023, this is 2% behind national levels

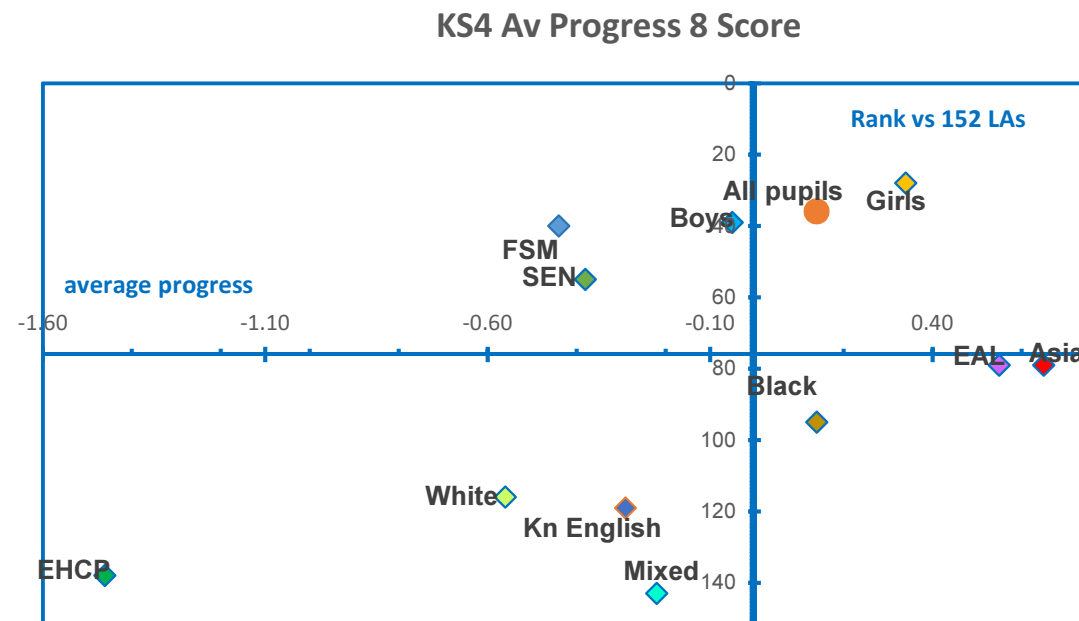
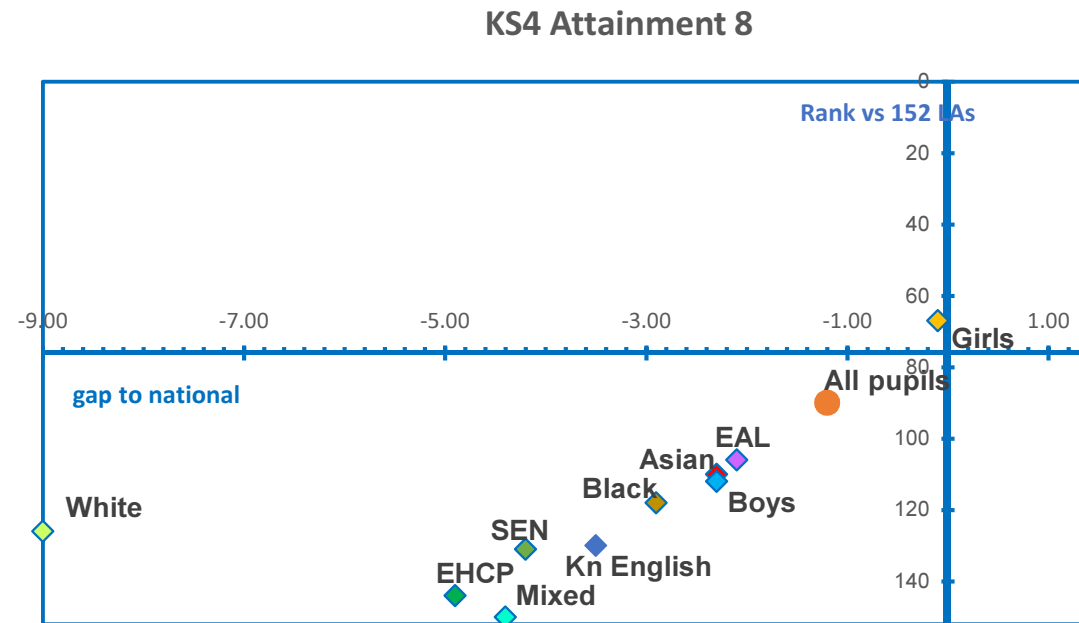
The gap to national narrowed for boys

For most pupil groups however, and those with EHCPs, SEN support and AL the gap widened

Leicester Children's outcomes for those eligible for Free School Meals has slipped in reading compared to national and still less than half of these children are achieving the combined measure of RWM compared to other groups of children. (39 out of 152 LAs)

Key Stage 4: GCSEs

There are many measures used to review aggregated results for children at end of KS4. This report focusses on Results achieved by Leicester young people are below national across all measures, however the gap to national has narrowed this year. Attainment 8 outcomes show that pupils of White heritage and those with an EHCP had a wider gap to their peers nationally and that the gap from national closed to Leicester's children eligible for FSM. Most groups closed the gap to national and improved their rankings, except for young people with EHCPs. Overall progress compared to national was better and the attainment gap closed.



Leicester City children: Summary

Only 2/3 of children in Leicester are ready for school, but we are closing the gap to national outcomes for children at Yr 1 phonics screening, the end of primary (KS2) and the end of secondary (KS4) show that attainment has not bounced back as quickly as nationally from pre-pandemic levels

Pupil attainment at the end of **KS1** compared to national has improved from 2022 and now at the same gap to national as in 2019

Pupils are still at a lower starting point compared to their peers nationally as they enter KS2. 80% of children in Leicester reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in 2023 at **KS2**, this is now 2% behind national levels

Leicester children at the end of Yr6 (KS2) still have better progress than national for Writing and Maths, not for Reading

At the end of **KS4**, the results achieved by Leicester young people are below national across all measures, however the gap to national has narrowed this year compared to 2022

Next Steps

OfE have said that school improvement is not the responsibility of Local Authorities – however we have influence in partnerships

Engagement with Schools

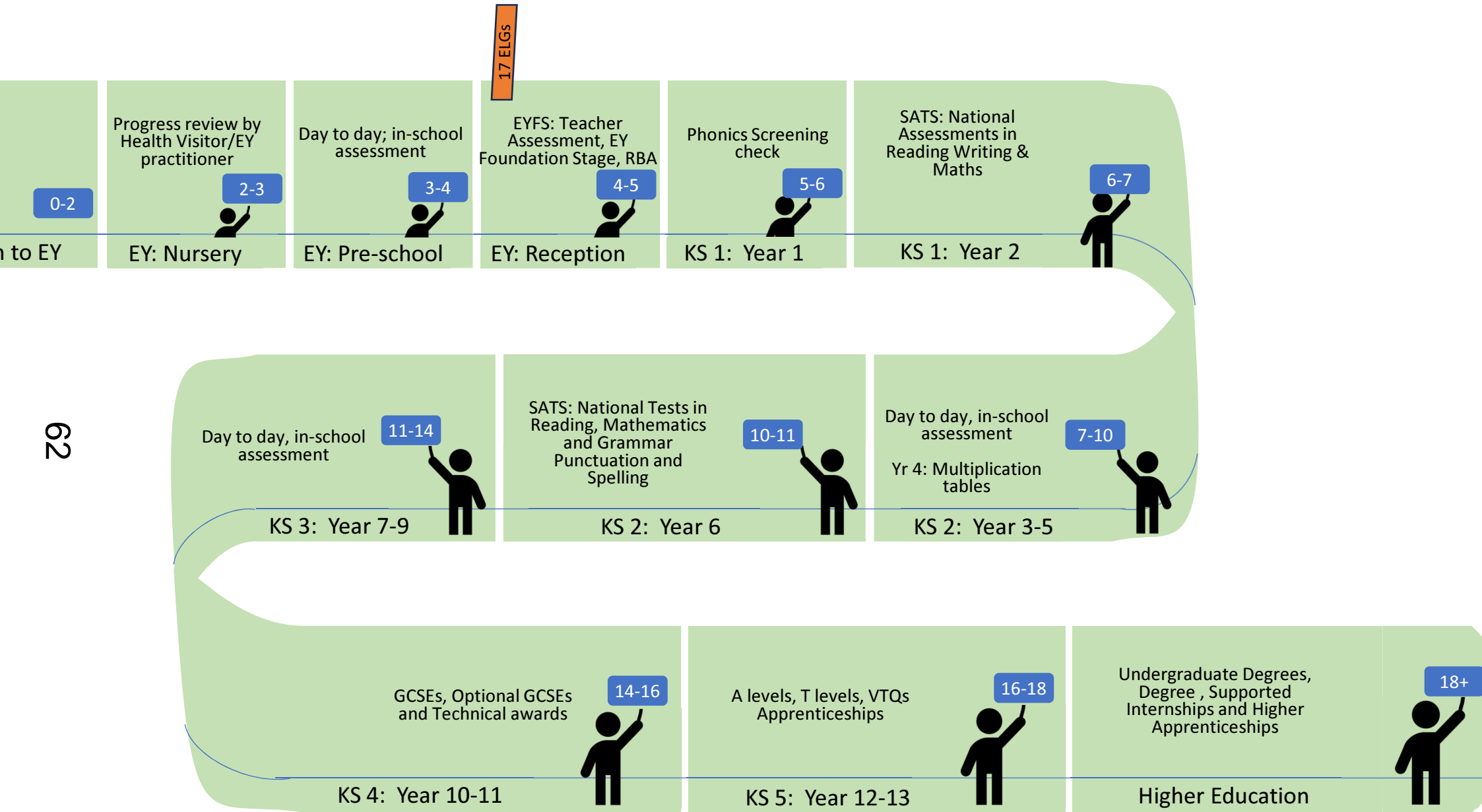
- Schools and educational settings through Keeping in touch, formal briefings with Governors, Leicester Primary Partnership and Secondary schools (SIEP and MAT groups)
- SEND and Alternative Provision Partnership, focus on Children with EHCPs and with SEN support

Early Years Strategy development

Continue to strengthen approach to attendance management, children missing education, exclusions

Reference Section

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Appendix C

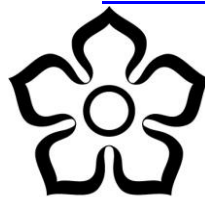
Fostering Service

Annual Report 2022 / 2023

LMB: 11 March 2024

Lead director: Laurence Jones

SCE Social
Care &
Education www.leicester.gov.uk



Leicester
City Council

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: David Thrussell, Head of Service Corporate Parenting
- Author contact details: 0116 454 1657
- Report version number: v1

1. Summary

- 1.1 Leicester City Council is fully committed to children in the care of the local authority living in loving family homes whenever possible. Our priority continues to be the recruitment of talented foster carers to enable more children to continue to live happy lives within local family households. This report provides an overview of the activity and performance that supported this commitment through the delivery of our own fostering service between 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023. The report should be read in conjunction with the annual statement of purpose which sets out the service aims, objectives and configuration.
- 1.2 The majority of our children looked after are living in family households with Leicester City foster carers looking after 65.2% of those in foster care. Most of our children live locally, with 83.1% of our mainstream foster care homes located within Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland.
- 1.3 The Fostering Service currently supports 137 mainstream fostering households, 62 Kinship fostering households and 13 short break fostering households.
- 1.4 We have an experienced cohort of foster carers: 37% of mainstream carers have 0-5 years' experience, 27% 5-10 years, 20% 10-20 years and 16% over 20 years' experience.
- 1.5 We recruited 16 new mainstream fostering households in 2022-23. 44% of our foster carers approved this year were approved to care for sibling groups.

- 1.6 77% of Leicester City Foster Carers are white British compared to 82% nationally. 23% of our carers have diverse heritages, compared to 15% nationally, and our foster carers speak over 20 languages and practice 16 different religions, some with no religion.
- 1.7 We approved 5 Enhanced Carers over the calendar year, with three children being newly placed with them, needing enhanced care.

2. Recommended actions/decision

- 2.1 This report is for information only and the Executive are asked to note and approve the Fostering Service Annual Report for 2022-23.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

- 3.1 The report has been prepared in consultation with the Service Manager for the Fostering Service and shared with relevant stakeholders in the mainstream Fostering and Kinship Teams, and the Children's Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Team. The report will proceed to Children & Young Peoples Scrutiny subject to agreement. The report contains some direct quotations from carers who have been supported over the past year.

4. Background and options with supporting evidence

- 4.1 This is a covering report for the attached Fostering Service Annual Report 2022/23.

5. Detailed report

- 5.1 Please refer to the attached main report. If you have any questions about the information contained in this Annual Report or the Statement of Purpose, please contact the Fostering Team on 0116 454 4510.

6. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

6.1 Financial implications

6.1.1 Tba

6.2 Legal implications

6.2.1 Tba

6.3 Equalities implications

6.3.1 Tba

6.4 Climate Emergency implications

6.4.1 Tba

6.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

6.5.1 None

7. Background information and other papers:

7.1 Fostering Service Annual Statement of Purpose 2019/20.

8. Summary of appendices:

8.1 None

9. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

9.1 No

10. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why?

10.1 No

fostering

Leicester City Council

Annual Report 2022/3



Purpose

The purpose of this annual report is to provide an overview of the activity and performance of the Fostering Service during 2022 - 2023.

The Fostering Service is essential in supporting our delivery of high-quality care and support for our children looked after, allowing them to live and thrive in a family home. The service ensures that our children and young people live in safe, stable, and appropriately matched foster families, and that our families are supported to deliver the best outcomes for our children and young people.

Our aim for children who are cared for is that that they will have a clear understanding of why they are looked after by the local authority, be given an opportunity to make sense of their experiences, knowing who is there to support them to achieve their goals and lead successful lives.

The Fostering Service is required to produce a written Statement of Purpose each year which sets out details of our services and how we will meet our commitment to providing high-quality care and support for our children, young people, and foster families.

The Fostering Service Annual Report and Statement of Purpose are available to all staff, foster carers, children and young people, parents, and other professionals in a variety of formats.



Highlights of 2022/3

The fostering service has continued to support our foster carers and the children in their care. Children and carers have been seen in person, with home visits taking place throughout this year.

Support for our foster carers has been provided through online forums, training events and professional practice days, whilst peer support has been encouraged. The Service Manager has continued to provide a weekly bulletin to foster carers providing additional advice and support, and access to online resources.

We have developed more presence at community events with foster carer support, giving us the opportunity to recruit more visibly and we have successfully piloted the Enhanced Foster Carer Scheme.

The Fostering Panel has continued to meet throughout the past year to ensure that potential foster carers can continue to be assessed and approved, and that children can be matched to carers without delay.

Initial viability assessments for potential Kinship carers transferred into the Kinship Team, providing temporary assistance to colleagues from the Children in Need Service. These assessments are of high quality and the most viable family members are being identified for our Children Looked After.

Key Successes

- Having increased our starting financial offer we have continued to be more competitive, which has led to high quality applications.
- Our capital funding scheme has allowed existing foster carers to expand their homes and offer more homes to children and young people.
- Foster carers continue to tell us that we are supporting them, and we have found ways of offering support such as peer support groups, face to face training events, professional practice days and regular newsletters.

Local Profile

- 43% of our Looked After Children are placed in foster care; with our Leicester City foster carers looking after 65.2% of those in foster care, which includes 270 children and young people in foster care.
- The Fostering Service currently supports 137 mainstream fostering households, 62 Kinship fostering households and 13 short break fostering households.
- We received 79 enquiries in 2022-23, of which 26 households applied.

- We recruited 16 new mainstream fostering households in 2022-23.
- Long term placement stability continues to be a priority. 37% of children looked after having remained in their foster home for more than 2 ½ years.
- 44% of our foster carers approved this year were approved to care for sibling groups.
- Most of our children are placed locally, with 83.1% of our mainstream foster care homes located within Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland.
- We have an experienced cohort of foster carers: 37% of mainstream carers have 0-5 years' experience, 27% 5-10 years, 20% 10-20 years and 16% over 20 years' experience.
- We are recruiting to match the needs of our children in care: 77% of Leicester City Foster Carers are white British compared to 82% nationally. 23% of our carers have diverse heritages, compared to 15% nationally, and our foster carers speak over 20 languages and practice 16 different religions, some with no religion.
- We approved 5 Enhanced Carers over the calendar year, with three children being newly placed with them, needing enhanced care.

Recruitment and Retention



Increasing the number of Leicester City foster carers is a significant priority for the Council. We aim to recruit and retain a large and diverse range of foster carers and short-breaks carers to match our children and young people’s needs.

Our dedicated recruitment and assessment team consists of 1 Team Manager, 1 Communications and Marketing Officer, 1 Enquiries Officer, 3.3 full time equivalent Assessment Social Workers and a Child Care Support worker. It should be recognised that as corporate parents, all services across the organisation play a role in supporting and delivering better outcomes for our foster families and our children.

The post for our Communications and Marketing Officer remained vacant for most of this year with the team working to cover the post’s work. This Officer’s role is to work closely with colleagues in the Corporate Communications Team to create appropriate and cost-effective recruitment campaigns, based on areas of need, using various online and more traditional methods such as posters, postcards, and banners as well as recruitment events, radio campaigns and adverts in newspapers. Our new Officer is now in post.

Our Enquiries Officer is available on the phone, e-mail, social media and in person at regular recruitment events to provide a friendly, warm welcome to fostering for Leicester City and to discuss individual circumstances.

Those interested in fostering are provided with information about upcoming information events. Once an application is received, an initial visit is arranged to discuss individual circumstances in more detail. This ensures that we are assessing the right people, at the right time.

Our assessments are completed by assessment Social Workers in a timely fashion but are also comprehensive and ensure that the foster family are ready to become foster carers.

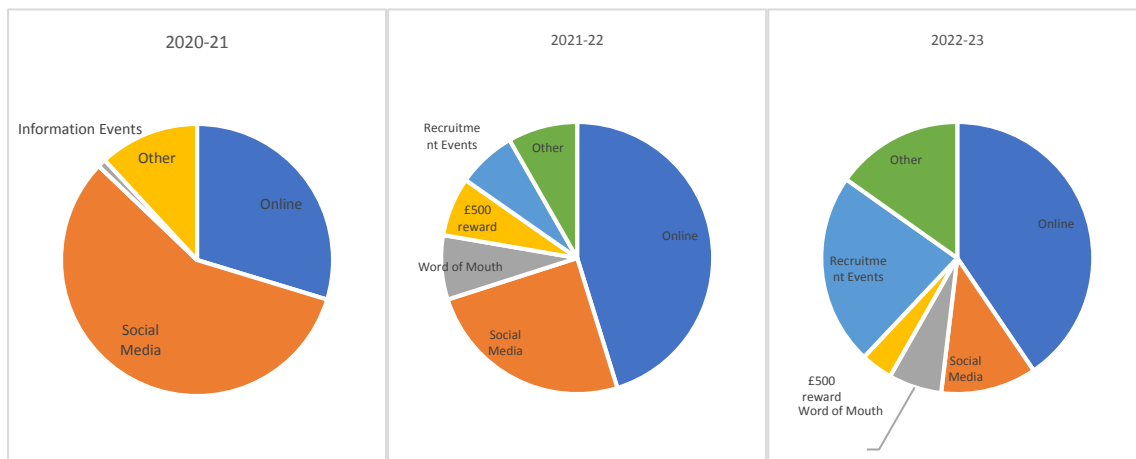
Outcomes

	2018-1	2019-2	2020-2	2021-2	2022-2
Enquiries	257	197	408	157	79
Applications	52	41	48	57	26
Assessments	47	31	25	29	25
Approvals	27	18	20	17	16
Enquiries to application	20%	21%	13%	36%	33%
Applications to assessment	90%	76%	46%	51%	96%
Assessments to approval	57%	58%	80%	55%	64%

Initial Enquiries

Our online presence remains strong, and the increased financial offer means we are now more competitive against our neighbouring local authorities and independent fostering agencies. Of the 79 enquiries received, a snapshot of where enquiries are received from is shown below:

- 40% (32) via Internet
- 11% (9) via Facebook
- 6% (5) via Word of Mouth
- 4% (3) via £500 reward
- 23% (18) via Recruitment Events
- 15% (12) other – including google ads, leaflets, Leicester Mercury, transferring from another Agency etc



As part of our new strategy, we have:

- ♥ Developed our Enhanced Foster Carer scheme to be more competitive with private agencies and meet the needs of our children with high levels of need.
- ♥ Refreshed our printed materials for Mainstream Fostering, Short Breaks, Postcards and the Specialist and Enhanced schemes.

Two successful recruitment strategies have been the 'golden hello' and the £500 reward payment. 10 of the 16 approved carers received a 'golden hello' of £1000 as they were approved for either sibling groups, or teenage placements. 3 current foster carers received a £500 reward for recommending friends who went on to be approved this year. This is a positive recruitment aid, as the applicants already have a realistic view of fostering and have friends who can offer support and advice.

We are currently progressing with procuring a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool which will help to respond to enquiries and applications at a time which is best suited to the enquirer, prioritise those who are most interested, automate admin processes, and highlight trends and areas of interest to ensure we are focusing on what will deliver the best outcomes. This is expected to be in place by early of 2024.

Applications

Nationally there is a distinct difference in conversion rates of initial enquiries to applications, due to the different ways of capturing what an initial enquiry is. Our conversion rate is approximately 1 application per 3 enquiries received, which compares well against IFAs with an average conversion of 1 application per 20 enquiries received, while other local authorities report a conversion of 1 application per 9 enquires.

Of the 79 enquiries, applications were received and progressed through to initial visits. Some applicants withdrew before the visit.

Of the 36 who proceeded to an initial visit, 20 were progressed through to assessment and 16 were withdrawn or rejected.

- 7 withdrew due to personal reasons.
- 2 lacked experience.
- 1 proceeded with another Agency.
- 3 space/housing
- 1 availability / not meeting service needs.
- 2 known information.

Assessments

Applicants who are unsuccessful include those who fail to meet basic requirements, for example their working pattern may not be flexible enough; they may lack experience of looking after or working with children; they may demonstrate that it would be unlikely they will meet the minimum standards. Some applicants may express attitudes inconsistent with fostering; they may have health issues that prevent fostering; some will be excluded after negative background checks.

Approvals

In 2022-23 we approved 16 fostering households.

Of these 16 approvals there were:

- 7 approvals for sibling groups (6 for 2 sibs, 1 for 3)
- 11 approvals offering care to children aged up to age 10
- 5 approvals offering care to children aged up to age 18
- 3 households approved as Enhanced Foster Carers
- 12 households approved for Short Term
- 1 household approved for Permanence.

It is not uncommon to see a higher number of not permanent carers during their initial approval – this allows the new carers the opportunity to gain experience and adapt their lifestyle to fostering. Over time, we begin to see not permanent carers expand their approval to permanent fostering at a time which is right for them and the children in their care.

Kinship (Family and Friends) Carers

There is a legal requirement for local authorities to assess all potential family members as potential kinship carers for looked after children.

Family members who need to be considered for kinship care are subject to an Initial Viability Assessment (IVA) usually carried out by the Children in Need Service arising out of care proceedings. This function transferred to the Kinship Fostering Service to support colleagues. The IVA work demands a speed of response, with most of the IVAs being carried out whilst in proceedings and must be turned around in 1 or 2 days. Work is ongoing to increase the number of Family Network Meetings and to carry out work earlier, in pre-proceedings.

Once completed, the viabilities are then passed through to a specialist Kinship Care Assessment Team in the Fostering Service. The Kinship Team complete the full assessment, the Form C, which is presented to the Fostering Panel, and if applicable, is redacted and filed in court.

Of the kinship assessments completed in 2022-23:

20 were approved.

3 were concluded as negative.

Practice Guidance documents have been written regarding Family Network Meetings, IVAs, and Kinship Fostering Assessments, including Regulation 24 requirements.

Fostering Panel

The role of the Fostering Panel is to make recommendations to the local authority regarding the suitability of foster carers. The panel also quality assures reports and gives feedback to the Team Managers to promote opportunities and share learning.

The Panel consists of experienced individuals who work to ensure that Looked after Children in Leicester City enjoy a consistently high standard of care with approved foster carers who can meet their needs.

In 2022-23 a total of 25 panel meetings were held – these meetings considered:

- 32 applications across mainstream, kinship and short break households
- 11 changes to approval
- 12 first reviews
- 17 additional requests (such as extensions to regulation 25, attached support and exemptions).

Permanence

Over the year, 26 children ceased to be Looked After due to their Kinship Carers and foster carers becoming their Special Guardians. 4 children were under 1 year old, 10 were aged 1 to 4; 4 were aged 5 to 9 and 8 children were aged 10 to 15 years of age. 10 were single children and a further 12 children were in sibling groups of 2, and there was a further sibling group of 4 placed together.

Our Local Support Offer for Foster Carers

Our Team

The main source of support for our foster carers is access to an experienced and qualified Supervising Social Worker allocated to each fostering household. Foster carers indicate that this relationship is one of the most important elements of the local offer as shown in the comments from a foster carer below.

"You are amazing! Always there on the end of the phone and never making us feel stupid for asking questions."

Our Local Offer

In addition to our Supervising Social Workers day-to-day support, we also offer a range of other support resources to support our foster carers, this includes:

- Our Foster Carers are provided with membership to Foster Talk, an independent, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to supporting Foster Carers. They provide a comprehensive support package including 24 hour legal, counselling, and medical and first aid helplines; accountancy and tax advice, high street discounts, legal expenses insurance, education advisory service, and independent support during allegations.
- A comprehensive Handbook for Foster Carers is published online.
- There are close working relationships with a range of childcare professionals including the child's Social Worker, Independent Reviewing Officer, the Virtual School Team, Health colleagues, and the Children and Families Support Team (CFST) providing therapeutic advice and direct work.

"... I would like to say how supportive L has been on the cases that we have worked together in particular that of RC and MW. L has gone over and above her remit to support me on the above cases resulting in some positive outcomes for the above children. L is a Fantastic SSW and a delight to work with. Thank you, L, for all your support and making a difference in the lives of the children we work with." Social Worker

- All carers have an annual review meeting chaired by a Fostering Independent Reviewing Officer (FIRO) who sits outside of the service within the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Team.

♥ *“Just wanted to pass on some really positive feedback from foster carer JC from her annual review today about you H – she spoke about you listening to her – often at length, described you as “so supportive” & said that she doesn’t know what she would have done without you this year..”* FIRO

- ♥ A peer support group is an established and thriving group run by foster carers in the city.
- ♥ An annual professional development Conference went ahead face to face this year, allowing foster carers and workers to learn together.
- ♥ Active Leicester Membership entitles the whole fostering family and those they care for to access free swimming and gym.
- ♥ 30 hours free childcare is provided for foster carers meeting eligibility criteria.
- ♥ Bespoke financial support is provided to foster carers via a Leisure Fund, to enable children and young people to sustain their interests over time, building confidence, skills, and enjoyment.
- ♥ Access to Bullfrog Arts focuses on improving the emotional health, wellbeing, and self-efficacy of looked after children and young people and their foster carers through music and singing culminating in an annual concert.

The Children and Families Support Team (CFST)

The Children and Families Support Team (CFST) provide assessment and intervention to children and their families and carers to enable them to live safely in their family environment and within the community. They are a multi-professional team, including Mental Health Practitioners, Social Workers, Play Therapists, Psychotherapist, Eye Movement and Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) Therapist and Post Adoption and Post- Special Guardianship Order (SGO) Support Workers. They have a wide range of knowledge and skills around Theraplay, Play Therapy, EMDR, Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP), systemic approaches, attachment, and therapeutic parenting.

The team has worked with 42 children who are Looked After (CLA) by the local authority over the past year, working with the child or young person and their caregivers. They have worked with 6 new young people (CLA and non-CLA) who have used Sexually Harmful Behaviour. Additionally, CFST provide training to foster carers and Hub meetings for case discussions and support. Over the past year CFST has helped over 25 foster carers via the CFST Hub; demand has doubled for this service when compared to 2021/22.

Training for Foster Carers

The three main areas of our training offer are Initial preparation training for mainstream carers, an ongoing offer of training for all carers, including one-off training provided by partners, and Training, Support and Development Standards (TSDS) for all carers.

The Skills to Foster courses have been run on a rolling programme approximately every 10 weeks to meet the needs of applicants. 4 courses were completed during 2023 run by a social worker and a foster carer. Over the past year 29 applicants were trained. These were followed by a session for Sons and Daughters, for ages 7 to 18. The feedback from this is positive, with 7 children appreciating an understanding of confidentiality, safeguarding and what a Supervising Social Worker does.

A virtual course has been developed and run by the Kinship Team, entitled Introduction to Kinship Foster Care. Other new virtual courses have been provided by Inspire Training including Therapeutic Parenting; Calming the angry child; Dealing with lying; Using PACE in real life; Overcoming compassion fatigue; Surviving the holidays; How to deal with arguing.

Foster Carers received a regular weekly email from the Service Manager with attachments and hyperlinks on a range of relevant information and resources throughout the year.

The 2023 Annual Conference '*Supporting Life Story Work for Children; Creative Ideas and Activities*' was day full of creative ideas from a leading expert, Katie Wrench about supporting Life Story Work for children. Katie is an experienced therapeutic social worker, qualified art psychotherapist, trainer and consultant and former foster carer. The aim of the training was to build worker confidence in managing difficult conversations with children and supporting carers explore their children's histories.

Training Support and Development Standards (TSDS) are completed by carers through commissioned e-learning from The Grey Matter Group. The six weekly drop-in sessions were moved to a virtual platform during Covid-19 restrictions, so the carers continued to benefit from the support from the Fostering Team and an experienced foster carer. All carers must complete their TSDS; mainstream carers need to complete this within a year of approval and Kinship Carers within 18 months. Newly approved carers are now demonstrating they can complete within this timescale. Further work is being undertaken to support kinship carers. The reviewing of individual foster carers and their training is monitored in supervision and in the Foster Carer Annual Review.

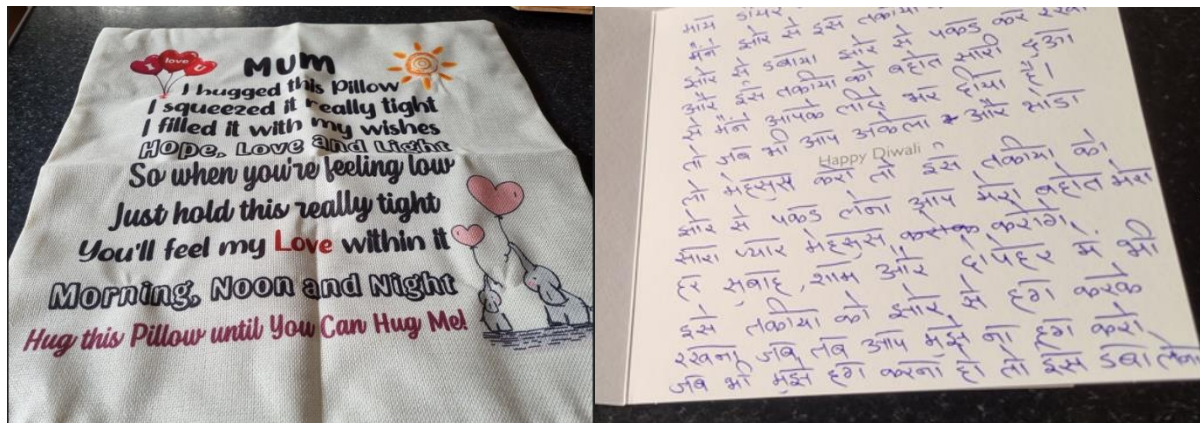
Quality Assurance

Foster Home Reviews are completed by a dedicated Fostering Independent Reviewing Officer (FIRO), whilst unannounced visits and supervisory visits completed by Supervising Social Workers, all contribute to an assessment of the child's lived experience in the home.. This means that foster carer's performance, consideration of training and development needs are reviewed regularly. Foster carers are positive about the support that they receive from their Supervising Social Workers and the service.

Commendations over the past year have included the following from a social worker:

" She was truly wonderful when I took three young, vulnerable, and emotionally distressed children to her care. This was an emergency placement and E had been woken in the early hours of the morning asking if she was able to care for these children. When I arrived, she was incredibly warm, friendly, and inviting. She quickly enabled the children to feel at ease in her home. She had tremendous patience with them and showed a true understanding of their needs. She was keen to get all the information about the children and even though this was limited she was able to confidently care for them. She showed awareness of the children's cultural needs and asked relevant questions and was not worried about asking the children directly. She was attentive and engaging. She was able to put enough ground rules in place to ensure the children were safe but without making them feel unwelcome. I have so many positive things to say about her. She is a true credit to Leicester City Council." Social Worker AB 12.04.2023

Below celebrates good practice of one of our foster carers, YS, who bought Diwali candles for the birth mother which were sent to the contact centre, along with a cushion giving hugs and a card giving the translation of the cushion which was written by the LCC translator. The baby was 4 months old and this was sensitive and kind care.



Managing Allegations

From 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022, there were 18 households involved in incidents of allegations against Foster Carers. All allegations or concerns are followed up rigorously by the service.

Safeguarding Strategy Meetings and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) investigations were held. There were 10 unfounded allegations and 5 unsubstantiated allegations. There were 3 substantiated allegations (one involving neglect, one of physical harm and one involving emotional harm). LADO Reports have been presented to the Fostering Panel and the Agency Decision Maker. One fostering household has subsequently been deregistered.

Placement Stability

Stable and secure relationships are a vital element to ensuring that our Looked After Children are safe and have the best possible opportunities to fulfil their aspirations, whilst consistent and high-quality relationships with carers add to their resilience and security.

Robust actions are taken to prevent placement breakdown and stability meetings are called to identify additional resources to stabilise placements deemed to be vulnerable.

As part of the strategy to improve permanence for our children looked after, a permanent fostering monitoring group (PFMG) has been established to review and track all children to ensure progress and prevent delay. This promotes better outcomes, supports placement stability, and reduces long-term arrangements with more costly IFAs.

Activity to support family finding for permanence includes:

- approaching existing foster carers – through a monthly e-bulletin.
- recruiting more permanent foster carers.
- approaching local Independent Fostering Agencies – through an e-bulletin; this has had a positive start in identifying permanent homes for our children.
- bespoke recruitment for specific children – this will be an innovative recruitment approach as evidenced by conversations with Coram BAAF.

Staying Put Scheme

Young people who are care leavers have the option of staying with their foster carer after they turn 18. Care Leavers make good use of Staying Put arrangements with their ex-foster carers post-18, with young people using this as a 'springboard' for increased independence, e.g., before they move on to their own accommodation, or higher education opportunities. All care leavers are encouraged to consider this option prior to leaving care, and currently there are 8 x 18yr olds, 6 x 19yr olds and 3 x 20yr olds living with their carers under 'staying put'.

Other young people return to their carers for Sunday lunches and celebratory events, and for ongoing support and interest in their lives. Policies and guidance are appropriately targeted for young people, professionals and those foster carers who wish to participate.

Looking Ahead to 2024

Recruitment of Foster Carers

Whilst we have an overall need for more foster carers, there are specific needs for more carers who can support young people over the age of 11 years, larger sibling groups and children and young people with more complex needs due to trauma histories and attachment difficulties.

We will continue to develop our Enhanced Foster Carer scheme and begin the recruitment for a Specialist Foster Carer scheme to care for children and young people with more

complex needs. We intend to start recruitment for Flexible Fostering in an attempt to attract a different cohort of potential foster carers.

We will strengthen our position using a CRM tool which will support our recruitment team to better understand and deliver a timely, effective response to enquiries and applications. This work with corporate communications and digital transformation will open new ways of working, which once implemented will lead to quicker response times, more focused work, and automation of tasks leading to better conversion rates and prioritising of resources.

Enhancing our Local Offer

We will continue to enhance our local support offer using learning from their annual foster home reviews and in consultation with foster carers to shape a local offer which meets the needs of our foster carers.

A Corporate Wide Commitment to our Foster Carers

We will continue to champion and advocate for a corporate wide commitment to our foster carers, recognising each service's role as a corporate parent to support our foster carers.

Participation and Engagement

We will continue to build on our participation and engagement work with our foster carers

Appendix D

Family Adoption Links Regional Adoption Agency

Annual Report and Statement of Purpose

**Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny
Commission**

26 March 2024

Lead director: Laurence Jones

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: David Thrussell, Head of Service Corporate Parenting
- Author contact details: 0116 454 1657
- Report version number: v1

1. Summary

- 1.1. For babies and young children unable to continue to live with their birth parents adoption provides an opportunity for a permanent loving home and family. Assessing adoption opportunities and providing the support to prepare adopters to take a child into their family, and to help them grow and thrive, is a priority for the local authority. This report provides an overview of the activity and performance of the Family Adoption Links Regional Adoption Agency incorporating Leicester City Adoption Service from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023. The report should be read in conjunction with the Leicester City Adoption Service Annual Statement of Purpose which sets out the service vision, principles, aims and objectives.
- 1.2. The report identifies the benefits of collaborative working that are delivered through regional arrangements for adoption, including marketing and recruitment of adopters, family finding and matching children for adoption, assessment and training of potential adopters and data sharing.
- 1.3. The report identifies positive developments achieved through ongoing collaborative working regionally including an enhanced website which has seen increased use by both prospective adopters and adopters. Pan regional 'getting to know you' events have also been successful in matching more prospective adopters to children requiring adoption across the region.
- 1.4. Leicester successfully managed to increase the number of adopter households approved in 2022/3 compared to the previous year despite the overall trend of approvals being down across the region.

- 1.5. 25 adoption orders were made on children from Leicester in 2022/3 which was a reduction on the previous year where numbers were unusually high due to delays in the court system which had been experienced during the Covid period. This trend in reduced numbers was also seen across the region in 2022/3 compared to the previous year. Most children placed for adoption were in sibling groups which is a significant achievement and the average age of children placed for adoption was two or under.
- 1.6. A higher number of children from Leicester were placed for adoption within the RAA region in 2022/3 compared to the previous year, and this resulted in fewer children being placed with voluntary adoption agencies.
- 1.7. Leicester has successfully matched children from a diverse range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds whilst still managing to place most of our children with adopters across the region.
- 1.8. There was an increase in the overall average of timeliness of children placed for adoption in 2022/3 however this was due to a small number of children with more complex needs which meant that their timescales were paused or extended impacting on the overall average number of days.

2. Recommended actions/decision

- 2.1 This report is for information only and the Executive are asked to note and approve the Annual Report for 2022-3.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

- 3.1 The report has been prepared in consultation with the Service Manager for the Adoption Service and the Performance Manager in the Regional Adoption Agency. The report will proceed to Children & Young Peoples Scrutiny.

4. Background and options with supporting evidence

- 4.1 This is a covering report for the attached Family Adoption Links Annual Report 2022/23 and the Leicester City Annual Statement of Purpose for Adoption.

- 4.2 The Family Adoption Links Regional Adoption Agency is supported by a small hub hosted by Lincolnshire County Council which coordinates agreed priority workstreams across the region. This includes a regional assessment, approval, and training workstream which is led by Leicester City.

5. Detailed report

- 5.1 Please refer to the attached Family Adoption Links Annual report for 2022/3. If you have any questions about the information contained in this Annual Report or the Statement of Purpose, please contact the adoption team on 0116 454 4550.

6. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

6.1 Financial implications

- 6.1.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.
Martin Judson, Head of Finance

6.2 Legal implications

- 6.2.1 There are no direct legal implications given that the report is for information purposes only.
Sonali Unka, Principal Solicitor,
Legal Services 0116 4541978

6.3 Equalities implications

- 6.3.1 The equality act expects us to show due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations. Our public sector duty expects us to demonstrate how we do this and included within this is how we undertake decisions, what information we are informed by and what impacts we have taken into consideration to address needs now and in the future.

- 6.3.2 The aims, objectives and services provided by the Family Adoption Links Regional Adoption Agency incorporating Leicester City Adoption Service in the annual report refer to the support provided to and outcomes of children across all protected characteristics.
- 6.3.3 The service advances equality of opportunity by ensuring that prospective adopters understand the relevance and importance of a young person's choice by ensuring that Children and young people's ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, belief and language is fully recognised and positively valued and promoted when decisions are made about them and that the needs of disabled children are fully recognised and considered when decisions are made.
- 6.3.4 The service also advances equality of opportunity and fosters good relations by encouraging and publicising adoption services to enable all members of the community to consider adoption as a positive option and to recruit from a wide variety of backgrounds to meet children's individual needs and by recruiting adopters who will respect a child's birth and family origins and who will bring up an adopted child knowing and understanding their origins. The commitment to providing Life Story Books and Later Life Letters of a high quality for adopted children also helps to ensure this happens.
- 6.3.5 In addition, the service helps to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations by recruiting adopters who will respect the diverse cultures and lifestyles within society and who will bring up children who will respect these differences. All adopted children are individuals who need to be carefully matched to the right family.

Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

6.4 Climate Emergency implications

- 6.4.1 There are no significant climate emergency implications directly associated with this report.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

6.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

6.5.1 None

7. Background information and other papers:

7.1 Adoption Service Annual Statement of Purpose 2022/ 2023.

8. Summary of appendices:

8.1 None

9. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

9.1 No

10. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why?

10.1 No



Family Adoption Links Annual Report 2022-23



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Appendix I

Background

The regional adoption partnership, Family Adoption Links, was launched in October 2020. This is a report relating to the developments within the year April 2022 - end of March 2023. This report fulfils the statutory requirement that an annual report be produced and will form each partners' Annual Adoption Report.

The government's Education and Adoption Act (2016) set out expectations for adoption services through the establishment of regional adoption agencies (RAA). By the end of 2020 every local authority was expected to become part of a RAA.

Following discussions with East Midlands authorities, Lincolnshire, Rutland, Leicestershire, and Leicester City agreed on an aligned partnership model and this was further strengthened by the formal inclusion of North Lincolnshire Council in early 2020 and Northamptonshire Children's Trust in January 2022.

It was agreed that Lincolnshire County Council would become lead authority for the RAA and the partnership was launched in October 2020 under the banner of "Family Adoption Links".

The RAA oversees a number of key areas of adoption provision including the recruitment of adopters, assessment and training, matching and placement of children along with development and coordination of post adoption support services. The delivery of services to children and adopters remains integrated into broader Children's Services within each Authority.

The strategic direction and development of the partnership is invested in the Board which comprises:

- Cornelia Andrecut, Director, Northamptonshire Children's Trust (Board Chair)
- Tara Jones, Assistant Director, Lincolnshire County Council
- Sharon Cooke, Assistant Director, Leicestershire County Council
- Caroline Tote, Assistant Director, Leicester City Council
- Paul Cowling, Assistant Director, North Lincolnshire Council
- Emma Sweeney, Head of Service, Rutland Council
- Olivia Ives, Assistant Director, Northamptonshire Children's Trust

Background

The partnership has a strategic vision:

“We’re a dynamic regional partnership,
aimed at delivering excellence in every aspect of adoption.

We strive to ensure the best possible match for children and adoptive parents and develop a comprehensive range of support services to ensure a positive adoption journey. We seek to develop the widest pool of professionals who engage in innovative and ground-breaking new adoption practices.”

A pooled budget was created within the RAA to fund central hub staffing costs including the RAA Head of Service post, Marketing Officer, Data Analyst and Business Coordinator. All of these were in post by April 2021 and budget agreed until the end March 2024.

The provision of the posts was funded by equal contributions from all partnership Authorities excluding Rutland. The cost of the hub staffing, and centralised services has remained the same in 22/23 despite an agreed increase.

The centralised structure is focused on the delivery of core components of the adoption services including initial contact, information sharing, pre and post approval training, data analysis and administrative support and has delivered financial efficiencies by avoiding duplication and retaining virtual delivery where appropriate to do so. In addition, the centralised approach to family finding has seen a significant shift from spending on external placements to a greater use of in partnership placements. This has resulted in a £300k saving across the region in 22/23.

The Head of Service post governs the management and decision-making of those Local Authority budgets in conjunction with the Adoption Managers that hold responsibility for the budgets locally. This ensures consistency in decision-making, assists with regional improvements, and identifies areas where practice needs to be aligned and future efficiencies could be identified.

Progress

The partnership has developed the “Family Adoption Links” regional brand. This regional brand reflects the vision, mission, values, and strategic outcomes of the Partnership.

The operational focus continues to be the development and maintenance of key pillars of activity. Each of these pillars or workstreams are led by Service leads from partner agencies supported by central resources. Each are based on effective partnership working and have standardised and shared processes and practice across the region. We will look at each in turn and reflect upon their evolution and development over the past year.

Marketing and Recruitment

The partnership has its own Marketing Officer who coordinates and leads all Marketing activity. She also acts collaboratively with the Workstream leads and marketing information is contained within these sections too. Marketing highlights for 22/23 are as follows:

A high performing website

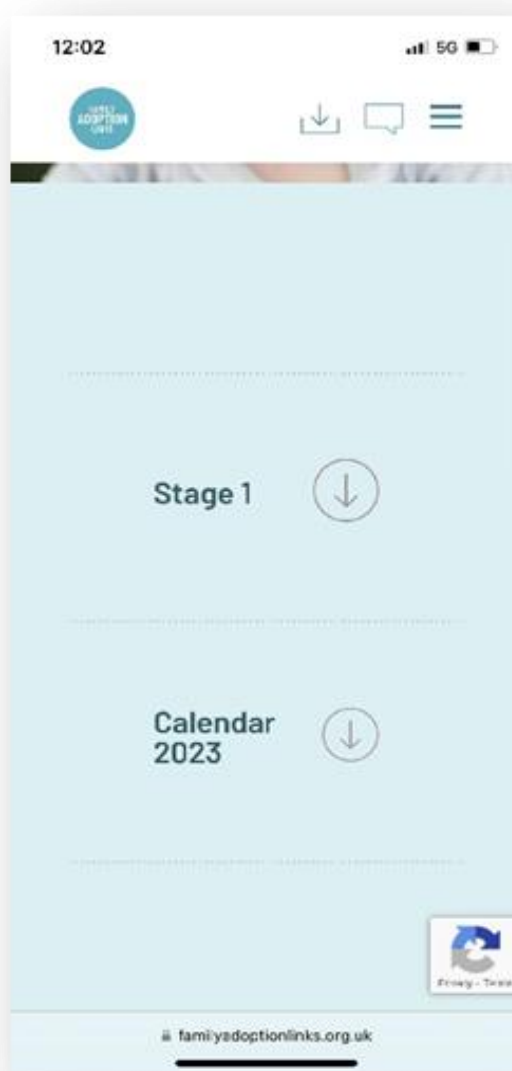
The Family Adoption Links website empowers potential adopters to self-serve with information on the children we are family finding for and gives them the ability to book on to an information event (451 places booked this year), watch the You Can Adopt video, download a You Can Adopt information guide or speak to a member of staff.

In addition, the site is a key pillar in our post adoption support offer. Adopters can book training, watch online videos, access the Adopter Resource Hub (a collaborative piece of work between FAL and the Adopter Consultation Hub) and ask questions. Users of the website have increased by 358% to 7,400 this year.

Marketing and Recruitment

A new development - Staff Intranet

The partnership has been working hard to align the practices and paperwork of Stage 1 of the adoption process. The new documents are now available via the staff Intranet. This enables all paperwork to be branded, centrally approved, consistent and if necessary, changed without delay. The intranet also hosts the Family Adoption Links Calendar, an interactive pdf where you can view and book onto all our events. Stage 2 materials are now being uploaded to enable staff to share valuable resources.



Marketing and Recruitment

The Eventbrite platform that delivers multiple efficiencies

Training places for both prospective and approved adopters are booked and administered using the Eventbrite platform. Internally, this platform has saved hundreds of hours of Social Worker time freeing the practitioners to concentrate on the delivery of the courses.

National Collaborations

Sharing best practice

FAL contributes to and participates in all National campaigns, recently Marketing Officer, Alex McGuire, presented at the regional meeting of the Midlands Together Collaboration. She briefed over 40 Family Finders on the results of and how to run a 'Getting to know you' event successfully. Feedback from the meeting included the following...



“Thank you so much for coming along to support the event. I think you will have sensed how impressed people were with the developments at FAL that you have implemented, and we all now want to clone you! “



Acting on a pan regional basis

In line with government best practice and in the interests of our children, we have invited adopters from other RAAs to our 'Getting to know you' event. This worked so well that we were then asked if we were interested in co-producing another event. As a result, we will receive £2,000 central funding for the event in October 2023.

Participating in national steering groups

Marketing Officer, Alex McGuire is an active member of the NARSG Ambition 4 Working Group which aims to improve the adopter experience.

Data

The Data Analyst for the region is Benjamin Richardson. Data is used to inform all workstreams and meet the national and local requirements of RAAs. The data analyst has developed significant relationships with Data Leads within each partner agency to effect accurate, national and local data outputs. The service benefits from a monthly summary of core performance data offering a dashboard crucial to practitioners and managers (see Appendix 1).



Due to the unique nature of each local authority's data strategies:

- We tailor our approach to each partner
- We are creating a data strategy that is sympathetic to each Local Authority's ambition and appetite to use data to inform decision-making
- We actively embed our regional reports across the partnership to get us closer to our data
- We promote how heightened data capabilities can benefit the service
- We also look outwards and meet with other RAAs to promote sharing best practice including:
 - Discussing broader topics that affect RAAs, such as the different approaches to Family Finding
 - Talking about how they use data to inform decision-making
 - Understanding what challenges both mature RAAs and those in their infancy face
- We work with Coram to test a new reporting dashboard
- We work with the RAA leaders' group (Digital solutions) to develop a suite of relevant comparative data

Monthly Data meetings

- Monthly data meetings with each partner has led to a much greater insight into the way that we can use data to enhance our decision-making
- Has removed duplication and improved our data-orientated processes
- FAL's embedded position in each Agency's data landscape has allowed us to understand more about how workers use data in their roles so that;
- We can help reduce the time workers have to spend trawling through data
- Grant workers more time to add value
- Automate any menial, manual task that could be automated

Workstreams

Workstreams are dynamically led by Service Leads from each of the partner agencies. Each is supported by a practitioner group who have worked collaboratively to develop a shared vision and implementation plan for a regionalised approach to service delivery. These groups are at the heart of the success of FAL and evidence practitioners' willingness to support, develop and deliver best practice to improve the outcomes for children with a plan for adoption. The workstreams are Assessment and Approval, Family Finding, Post Adoption Support and Early Permanence.

Assessment and Approval

The Assessment and Approval workstream is led by Georgina Oreffo from Leicester City. This workstream's aims are for all those who approach and are assessed by the RAA to receive a consistent baseline experience with regards to their initial enquiry, assessment and training; and following approval there is a core offer of post approval training to ensure consistency of approach and preparation across the RAA. An agreed modular approach to both pre and post approval training is in place. The content, slides, notes and supporting materials of the Information Evenings and preparation courses have been agreed, with stylish and professional rebranding, and joint delivery across the partnership.



Prepare to Adopt
Training

Welcome to Day 1



Assessment and Approval

The group has developed an integrated and seamless training plan to support adopters post approval. The mode of delivery has been enhanced by the development of the website which acts as a hub for online and face-to-face training modules. The booking system for the courses is managed efficiently through the electronic booking system saving significant staff time and for courses to be available to adopters across the partnership providing more rapid access and providing staff flexibilities. A separate training sub-group now oversees quality assurance and course development, to maintain a continuously improving offer for our adopters, to improve resilience, strengthening placements and contribute to strong families.

We have changed the workstream name, as we move along the trajectory from Adopter Assessment and Pre and Post Approval Training to the Assessment and Approval Development workstream. We now have a Stage 1 fully branded assessment pack for our workers with updated safeguarding information from the Cumbria Child Safeguarding Practice Review and we have also completed Stage 2. We continue to aim for high quality, creative ways of working, and sharing best practice with colleagues.

Family Finding

The Family Finding workstream is led jointly by Sharon Clarke from Lincolnshire and Michelle Robinson from Leicestershire. Tracey Morton from Northamptonshire Children's Trust has more recently become more involved as a twin approach to the Early Permanence Workstream. The ambition of the partnership is to provide a consistent approach to family finding and ensure that the partnership can meet the needs of most children requiring adoption.

The workstream has continued to be creative in family finding for our children who have traditionally 'waited longer.' There have been two activity days where 9 children have been successfully linked and subsequently placed with their adoptive families. We also hold Discovery Events on a quarterly basis, where approved adopters have access to a secure video link where they can watch bespoke videos from social workers and foster carers about the children who are waiting.

Family Finding

This approach uses videos that are not on Link Maker and is aimed to bring the children 'to life' in a refreshing and creative way. The link is available for a 3-day period so adopters are able to go back in and view the videos more than once. We also have 'Matching Monday' where profiles of children waiting are sent to designated leads across each partner authority who then shares the profiles with family finding staff. This approach highlights the children who are waiting, and as new adopters are approved they can be approached for expressions of interest.

Regional monthly family finding meetings are in place and all children without an identified link are discussed and tracked through to either a match being ratified by the Agency Decision Maker, or the care plan being changed from one of adoption. This meeting is supported by Benjamin Richardson (Data Analyst) and Alex McGuire (Marketing Lead). The support of both is crucial in ensuring that data is up to date and validated and that children have good quality photos and videos on Link maker. Alex also organised specific social media campaigns, ensures that children have anonymized profiles on our website and is also manages the activity days and Discovery Events.

The approach of the family finding meetings has been hugely successful in ensuring that more children are placed within the region. 77% of our children were placed within Family Adoption Links last year. This means that we know our adopters and children well and that there has been a regional financial saving in the cost of using interagency placements. Further consideration will be given to the continued use of a no fee approach across the partnership during 2023/24.

The next year will see an increased focus on adopters across the region. We aim to increase regional matches by ensuring a more thorough visibility of those applicants coming through the assessment process and approved adopters. Pre and post approval training has been reviewed to ensure that regionally we are able to support adopters to consider children who wait longer.

Adopters waiting will also be discussed as part of the monthly family finding meeting to ensure that all options have been considered for our children. This, alongside starting to increase the data we collect about children in the earlier stages of their adoption journey, will increase our understanding in relation to sufficiency needs.

Family Finding

Family finding events.

The 'Getting to Know You' event.

The partnership hosted 2 'Getting to know you' events to enable waiting children and adopters to meet each other in a relaxed and party like environment.

The objectives of the events were to stretch adopter thinking by giving them the opportunity to get to know children that they may otherwise have not considered.

The events were attended by 26 adopter households and 18 sets of children resulting.

in 5 adoptions and 4 sets of children having a link pursued. The cost per child was £89 vs a cost per child of £600 per child for a Coram BAAF event.



The Discovery Event

For those adopters who were unable or felt attending the 'Getting to know you' event may be uncomfortable, we created the innovative 'Discovery Event' – a confidential video profiling event. Sent using a private link and available for 48 hours only, the video attracted 141 views and saw enquiries increase 400% on Link maker during the weekend of the event.

This was a £0 cost event and details of how to organize such an event were also presented to the Midlands Together Collaboration as an example of excellent practice.

Making a Difference for Children

“Lincolnshire had looked for a long time for the right adopters an older sibling group. We took the children to a FAL activity day, and there was lots of interest, but one couple shone through, and we have been able to successfully place the children. The adopters have supported sibling contact meaning that the children can retain positive links to their younger brothers and sister”.

Adoption Support

Adoption support is the final key workstream and is led by Karen Everatt from North Lincolnshire. It builds on the practice delivered within the workstreams. All partners have a different post adoption support offer and that is likely to remain the case. The ambition is for all adopters at the point of initial contact to have information about the support available with the website signposting the local details. The group is developing a core offer which establishes a starting point for both prospective and registered adopters and is informed by shared practice expertise from across the region. As part of this work and in addition, the workgroup has focused on the following areas.

- Post order training with direct access to the training hub offering a range of relevant training courses.
- Establishment of the Adopter Hub which has co production at its heart and ensures that FAL engages actively with adopters.
- Development of Collabor8 an online community for young people in place to offer, both support and ensure that the child's voice is central to our service direction.
- Provision of Thrive a regular newsletter for Adopters.
- Working with Virtual schools across the partnership to develop and deliver the Education Passport

The concentration on a core offer has enabled FAL to create some economies of scale in both the provision of information and training for adopters and developing a partnership directory of therapeutic providers which may support more effective commissioning for all partners. The provision of the Adoption Support Fund will continue for the next 3 years, and our challenge will be to ensure quality and value for money of our post adoption provision, balancing the ratio of what each Authority delivers with what is drawn down from the Government fund.

Making a Difference for Children

The development of the Collabor8 group for children ensures that the children's voice is at the heart all developments within FAL. Although very much in its infancy, it brings together children from across the region, either face to face or virtually and enables them to share their experiences of adoption. The initial focus was upon the experience of school and education and their focus on transition, not having to tell their story too many times and the need for private space was taken directly into the work of the Virtual Heads in developing and introducing an Education Passport. This model of "You said, we did" will support the further work of the group.

Adoption Support

Thrive Adoption Support Newsletter

The quarterly Adoption Support newsletter Thrive is sent to over 1,000 adopters offering them an invaluable source of information, advice and support.

Content is discussed and created by representatives from across the partnership and performance rates are closely monitored to ensure that we are delivering articles that adopters want to read.

The newsletters achieve industry leading KPIs with an average open rate of 55.43% and click rate of 9.53%.



Early Permanence

As with adoption support, this is an area of practice that has considerable Government focus and is frequently a key line of enquiry of OFSTED inspections. For a partnership RAA it is complex given the different court jurisdictions and established local practices.

The partnership reflects these differences and there is a variation in how well embedded it is in childcare planning. Apart from some geographically compact areas, national work on Early Permanence has concentrated on establishing good practice models and developing consistent forms, assessments, training and support to carers.

That approach sits well within the structure of FAL and reflects what has been achieved within other workstreams. For FAL, this is our most recent area of focus.

The workstream has established the following objectives and will develop practice in 23/24 in line with learning from the National commissioned work that is underway:

Early Permanence

- Develop EP best practice pack based on the approach of each partner. Identify referral pathway and best practice guidance.
- Workshop for practitioners to be developed to raise awareness of EP and promote a consistent practice approach across FAL partner agencies – plan for workshops to be delivered to staff across adoption, fostering childcare teams and IRO services
- Workshop for ADMs (with AEM)
- Exploration of engagement with Cafcass and judiciary
- Review applicant training materials to develop a single training offer across the region
- Develop support groups for EP carers and staff.

Stakeholder Engagement

Family Adoption Links is continuing to engage key stakeholders within and beyond the council to align services and to identify broader opportunities for transformation and development. The adoption agenda is moving from one that is purely regional to one based on pan regional and national service improvement and delivery.

This includes representing the region to the Department of Education (DfE), at the National RAA Leaders Group Leaders Partnership group and the Regional Adoption & Special Guardianship Leadership Board. Hub staff are engaged in national workstreams ensuring that the structures in place for FAL are shared and influence national delivery.

The partnership has been further cemented by the regional commissioning of New Family Social and Link Maker memberships. Since its inception, FAL has concentrated on developing a regional approach to core aspects of the adoption service. At the same time, we have begun to collaborate with other RAAs either by way of attending joint training or extending invites to activity day events.

At the same time, we have delivered joint events with Adoption East Midlands developing a support forum for Agency Decision Makers.

Conclusion

The region has experienced 4 OFSTED inspections in 22/23, all of whom have recognised the progress made and the enhanced services offered to both prospective adopters and adopters alike. The sharing of good practice and joint work has cemented the key pillars that we have put in place. We continue to develop workstreams incrementally and seek to incorporate the national priorities and direction. The forthcoming framework for inspection of RAAs may well influence future priorities and structures required for their delivery and FAL is positioning itself to respond to any new challenges that arise.

Plans for 2023/24



Website

Further development of the staff intranet for access to standardised forms and paperwork.



Co-production

The Adopter Consultation Hub will continue to inform our workstreams. Collabor8 will be enhanced with improved recognition of young people's attendance and contribution.



Education Passport

The Education Passport will be implemented for use within schools across the region.



Data

We will further develop the partnership approach to data collection and use, ensuring that all partners have access to accurate data that supports their adoption delivery and that ASG returns can be administered through a central point.

This report was written by John Harris, Family Adoption Links Head of Service.

john.harris@lincolnshire.gov.uk 07920



27486

The below view shows the key stages of the Child and Adopter Journey for Leicester City.

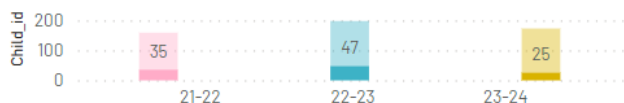
FAL Children Overview



FAL Adopter Overview

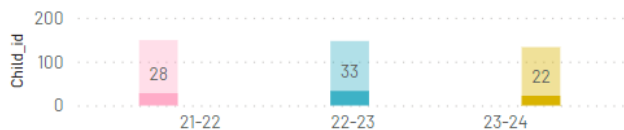
ADM decision child should be placed for adoption

Fiscal Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23 ● 23-24



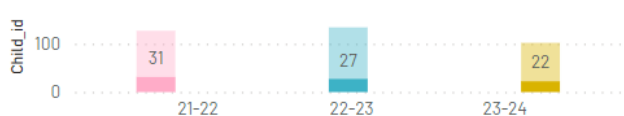
PO/s Granted

Fiscal Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23 ● 23-24



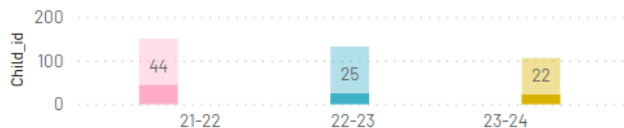
Children Placed

Fiscal Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23 ● 23-24

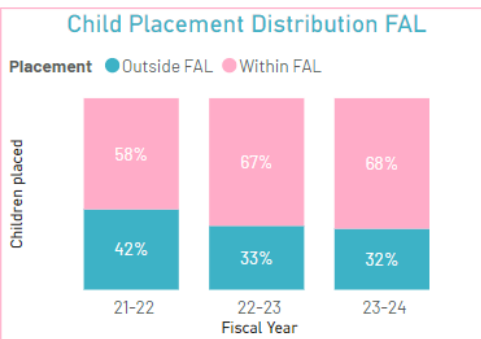


Adoption orders Granted

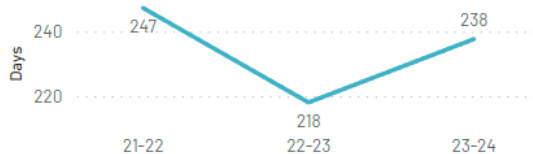
Fiscal Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23 ● 23-24



This dashboard reports on the key stages in the Child and Adopter journey and is a direct representation of the data we have submitted via our ASGLB returns.

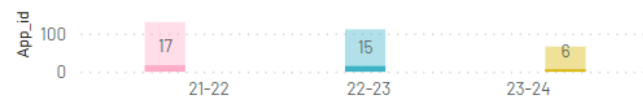


A2 Measure- PO to Match (average days)



Number of Registrations

Fiscal Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23 ● 23-24



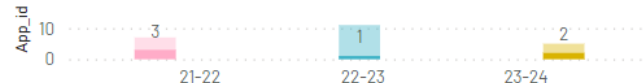
Number of Fast Tracked Registrations (2nd Time Adopters)

Fiscal Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23 ● 23-24



Foster Carer Approved Adopters

Fiscal Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23 ● 23-24



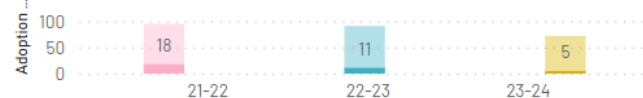
Number of Household Approvals

Fiscal Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23 ● 23-24



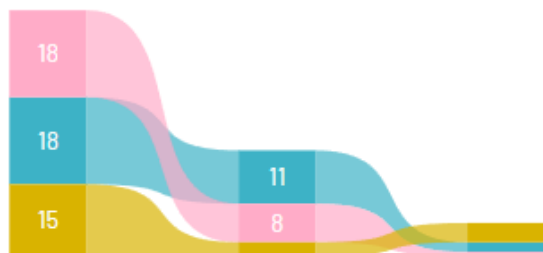
Adoption orders granted

Fiscal Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23 ● 23-24



Child Placements by Provision Type

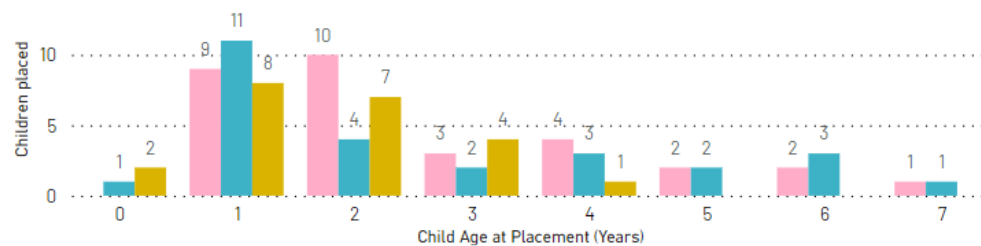
Fiscal Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23 ● 23-24



The visual to the left shows that Leicester City has used less VAA's consistently since 21-22. We see a slightly higher usage of other RAA's in 23-24 and this was for a sibling group of 3 and one of 2, which is a sibling group size that we have had challenges in finding adopters for in 23-24.

Child Placements (Age Profile)

Fiscal Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23 ● 23-24



This shows the age profile of the children that we have placed in Leicester:

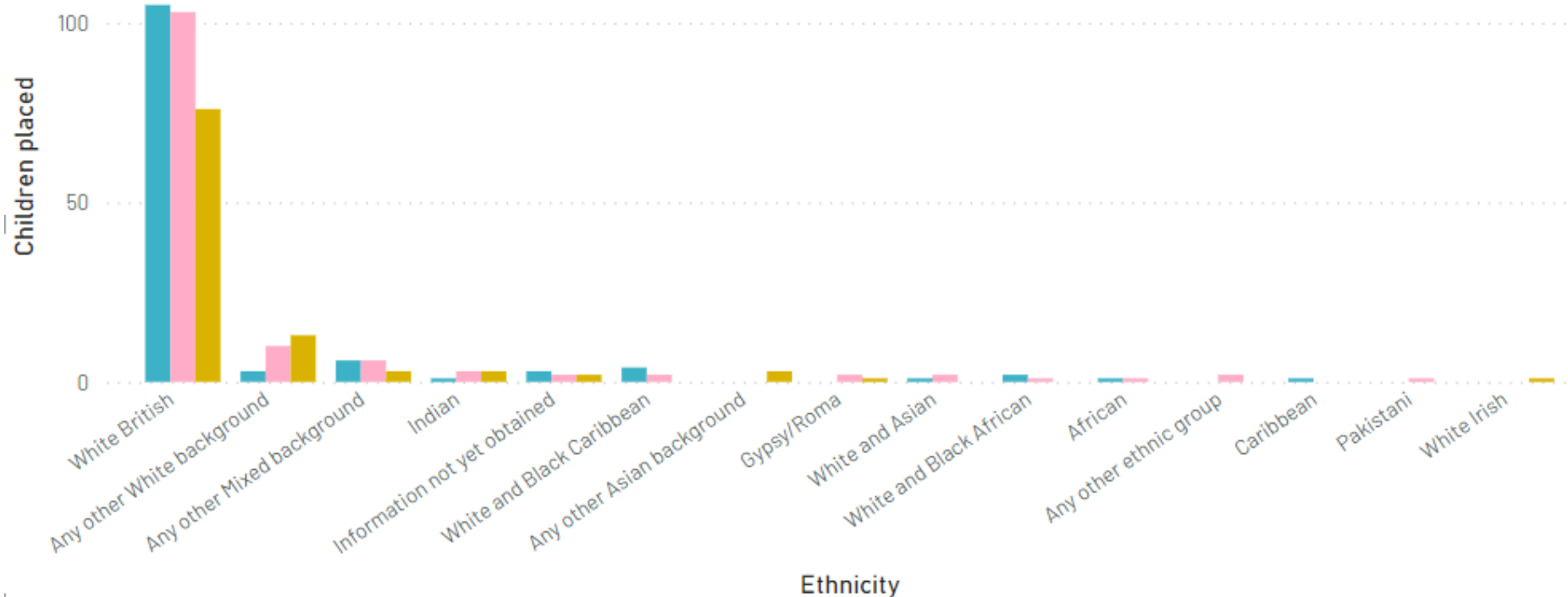
Leicester City have placed the widest range of children with cultural needs and ethnicities across the region, and a picture of these placements that Leicester have made can be found below:

Child Placements by Ethnicity



Fiscal Year ● 21-22 ● 22-23 ● 23-24

108

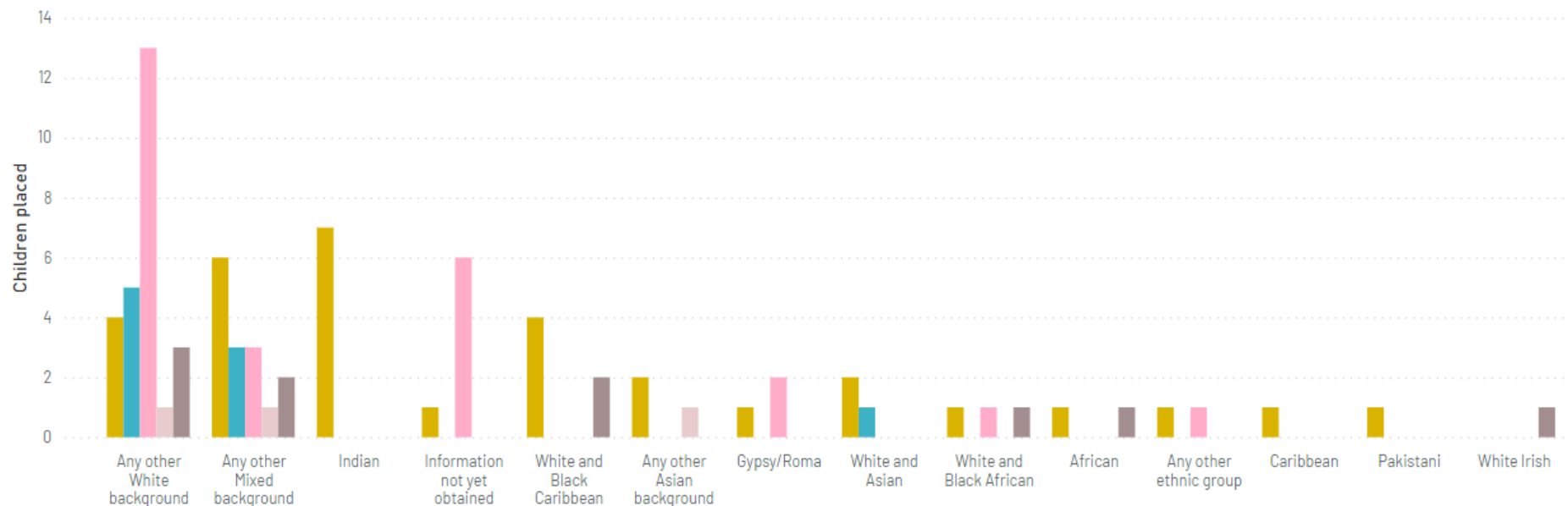


In comparison to our partners around the region, the below shows all the children that have been placed between 1/4/21-31/12/23, that are not of a White British Ethnicity.

Child Placements by Ethnicity

LA Name ● Leicester ● Leicestershire ● Lincolnshire ● North Lincolnshire ● Northamptonshire

609



The below shows the top 10 longest child placements from 1/4/2021 until 31/12/2023:

Line Level Placement Timeliness Detail

LA Name	Fiscal Year	Child ID	Age at Placement (Years)	Gender	Sibling Group	Siblings placed together	Ethnicity	Average of Entered Care to PO	Average of Entered Care to Placed (Measure A1)	National Average Comparator (A10)	Average of PO to Match (Measure A2)	National Average Comparator (A2)	Average of PO to Placed (days)
Leicester	21-22	726605	4	Male	No		White British	182.00	1330.00	850	1141.00	944	1148.00
Leicester	21-22	717049	5	Male	No		White British	532.00	1637.00	1157	1105.00	908	1105.00
Leicester	21-22	713489	6	Male	No		Indian	413.00	1116.00	636	664.00	467	703.00
Leicester	22-23	797793	4	Female	No		White British	508.00	1083.00	603	575.00	378	575.00
Leicester	21-22	703117	7	Male	Yes	3	White British	305.00	863.00	383	535.00	338	558.00
Leicester	22-23	729603	6	Male	Yes	2	Any other White background	270.00	828.00	348	534.00	337	558.00
Leicester	23-24	808135	3	Male	Yes	2	White British	329.00	850.00	370	521.00	324	521.00
Leicester	23-24	830389	2	Male	No		Any other White background	237.00	738.00	258	501.00	304	501.00
Leicester	21-22	796581	2	Male	No		White and Black African	188.00	612.00	132	413.00	216	424.00
Leicester	23-24	817113	2	Male	No		White British	320.00	711.00	231	391.00	194	391.00

The below shows the top 10 fastest child placements from 1/4/2021 until 31/12/2023:

Line Level Placement Timeliness Detail

LA Name	Fiscal Year	Child ID	Age at Placement (Years)	Gender	Sibling Group	Siblings placed together	Ethnicity	Average of Entered Care to PO	Average of Entered Care to Placed (Measure A1)	National Average Comparator (A10)	Average of PO to Match (Measure A2)	National Average Comparator (A2)	Average of PO to Placed (days)
Leicester	22-23	812926	1	Female	No		White and Black Caribbean	321.00	364.00	-116	29.00	-168	43.00
Leicester	22-23	819342	1	Female	No		White British	320.00	356.00	-124	36.00	-161	36.00
Leicester	23-24	842287	1	Female	Yes	2	White British	144.00	181.00	-299	37.00	-160	37.00
Leicester	22-23	823074	1	Female	No		Any other Mixed background	135.00	186.00	-294	51.00	-146	51.00
Leicester	22-23	820204	1	Male	No		Pakistani	561.00	616.00	136	55.00	-142	55.00
Leicester	21-22	803236	1	Male	No		Any other White background	306.00	363.00	-117	57.00	-140	57.00
Leicester	21-22	799094	1	Male	No		White British	276.00	349.00	-131	64.00	-133	73.00
Leicester	21-22	723906	4	Male	No		White British	1475.00	1566.00	1086	78.00	-119	91.00
Leicester	22-23	737622	1	Female	No		White British	326.00	410.00	-70	80.00	-117	84.00
Leicester	21-22	775957	2	Male	No		White British	538.00	641.00	161	86.00	-111	103.00

Appendix 6

Adopter timeliness measures (Leicester):

Fiscal Year	Households with Children placed	Aggregated total of FAL Adopters							
		Average of Enquiry to Stage 1 start (Months)	Average of Stage 1 Started/Stage 1 Ended (Months)	Average of Stage 1 Ended to Stage 2 Started	Average of Stage 2 Started/Stage 2 Ended (Months)	Average of Stage 2 to child(ren) matched with adopter (Months)	Average of Stage 2 to child(ren) placed with adopter (Months)		
21-22	14	3.67	3.67	0.08	6.67	4.57	7.18		
22-23	9	2.71	3.71	0.29	7.89	6.89	7.00		
23-24	11	1.36	3.91	0.18	9.48	7.00	8.57		

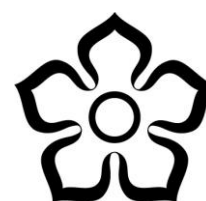
Children Timeliness (Leicester):

Fiscal Year	Children Placed	Aggregated Placement Timeliness (days)					
		Average of Entered Care to Placed (Measure A10)	National Average A10	Average of PO to Match (Measure A2)	National Average A2	Average of PO to Placed (days)	
21-22	31	663.63	183.63 ↑	247.25	50.25 ↑	260.94	
22-23	27	692.23	212.23 ↑	218.04	21.04 ↑	227.09	
23-24	22	530.09	50.09 ↑	237.63	40.63 ↑	248.37	

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Leicester City Adoption Service

Annual Statement of Purpose 2023/24



Purpose

As an Adoption Service in England we are required to produce a written Statement of Purpose each year which sets out details of our services and how we will meet our commitment to providing high-quality care and support for our children, young people and adopters.

The Statement of Purpose is available to all staff, prospective adopters, children and young people, parents and other professionals in a variety of formats. You can find the most up to date copy on our website www.leicester.gov.uk/adoption.

Summary

Leicester City Council is part of Family Adoption Links (FAL), a regional partnership of Adoption Services. The government's agenda for adoption was set out in a paper, "Regionalising Adoption", published by the Department of Education (DfE) in June 2015 setting out arrangements for the formation of Regional Adoption Agencies (RAA's) by 2020.

This partnership comprises of Leicester City Council, Lincolnshire County Council (who provide adoption services for Rutland Council), Leicestershire County Council, North Lincolnshire Council and Northamptonshire Children's Trust. It has been agreed that Lincolnshire County Council will act as host for the arrangement.

The interagency agreement creating the partnership commenced on 14th October 2020 and describes how FAL manages the provision of all core adoption functions on behalf of the local authority. Agency decision making for adults and children are maintained within the local authority in line with corporate parenting responsibilities.

Through working in partnership, we will benefit from the regional sharing of best practice, pooling of resources and developing a strategic approach to the development of a range of services from the marketing of adoption across the region through to the commissioning of post adoption support services.

The service allows our children and young people to live in safe, stable, and appropriately matched families. Our aim for children who are cared for is that they will have a clear understanding of why they are looked after by the local authority, be given an opportunity to make sense of their experiences, knowing who is there to support them to achieve their goals and lead successful lives.

The Statement of Purpose explains the aims, objectives and services provided, as well as details about our complaints and quality assurance services.

The primary aim of the Adoption Service is to ensure that children, who are referred for an adoptive placement, are placed within a caring and supportive family that can meet their needs during childhood and beyond.

We are committed to supporting our adoptive families and continue to develop our support offer. More information about the adoption service and the support offered can be found on our websites <https://familyadoptionlinks.org.uk/> www.leicester.gov.uk/adoption.

If you have any questions about the information contained in this Statement of Purpose, please contact the adoption team on 0116 454 4550.

Our Vision, Principles and Values

The primary aim of the Adoption Service is to ensure that children, who are referred for an adoptive placement, are placed within a caring and supportive family that can meet their needs during childhood and beyond.

The service aims to:

- Place children at the centre of the adoption process and always act in their best interests, ensuring the process is timely and avoids delay.
- Have the widest range of adopters trained to meet the needs of children placed with them.
- Ensure matching delivers the best quality outcomes for all children.
- Recruit high quality adoptive families to meet the needs of children referred for adoption, whilst recognising that family life can be experienced in different ways.
- Provide a range of services and information to adoptive families, birth families and adoptive children.
- Provide a range of post adoption support services for families and children to ensure adoptive placements are successful.
- Provide a service that meets statutory requirements and National Minimum Standards.
- Ensure adopters receive a consistent, high quality and professional service at all stages of the process.
- Have the same high standard of adoption support for all adoptive families across the region.
- Ensure Family Adoption Links, local authorities and Voluntary Adoption Agencies work together to promote and maximize choice for children and adopters.

Objectives of the Service

- To ensure children's needs have been fully assessed and an adoption plan is in the child's best interest.
- To provide a suitable adoptive placement for every child with a plan for adoption.
- To ensure, that the views of children and young people have been listened to and have been given due consideration in any decisions that are taken about their future.
- To regularly publicise adoption services to enable all members of the community to consider adoption as a positive option, and to recruit carers from a wide variety of backgrounds to meet children's individual needs.
- To recruit adopters who will respect a child's birth and family origins, and who will bring up an adopted child knowing and understanding their origins.
- To recruit adopters who will respect the diverse cultures and lifestyles within society, and who will bring up children who will respect these differences.

- To recruit adopters who will respect a young person's choice, in terms of sexuality, gender and religion.
- To recruit, train and retain highly skilled and appropriately qualified staff that understand the adoption process, and can support family placements.

Principles

The Adoption Service believes that: -

- Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family which can meet their needs during childhood and beyond.
- It is best for children where possible to be brought up by their own birth family.
- The child's welfare, safety and needs are at the centre of the adoption process.
- The child's wishes, and feelings will be actively sought and fully considered at all stages of the adoption process.
- Delays in adoption can have a negative impact on the health and development of children and should be avoided wherever possible.
- Children and young people's ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, religion and language should be fully recognised and positively valued and promoted when decisions are made about them.
- The ongoing needs of children should be fully recognised and considered when decisions are made, recognising any disabilities and learning difficulties.
- The role of adoptive parents in offering a permanent family to a child who cannot live with their birth family should be valued and respected.
- Children have the right to grow up knowing they are adopted and should have access to information about their family of birth.
- Where appropriate children should continue to have contact, either directly or indirectly, with those family members who are significant to them.

Standards of Care

The Adoption Service aims to provide safe, secure and high-quality care in family settings for children whom a plan for adoption has been agreed. This will be achieved to the standards set out in the Adoption Services Regulations 2002, 2011 and The Adoption Agencies (Panel and Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2012 (referred to as the "Regulations"), the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations (2010) The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013, The Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013, The Adoption Support Services Regulations (2005), The National Minimum Standards for Adoption Services (2014) and The Statutory Guidance amended (2011) and July (2013 and 2014).

The Service

Service Manager: Ellie Boswell (From 25 March 2024)

Telephone: 0116 454 4506

Family Adoption Links (FAL) is a regional adoption partnership which includes Leicester City Council, Social Care and Education.

The Agency Decision Maker on behalf of the Local Authority is Julia Khoosal, Head of Service, Child Safeguarding and Quality Assurance.

The Adoption Service Team

The Adoption Service includes qualified and experienced staff as follows:

- Team Manager: who is responsible for the day to day work of the Adoption Assessment Team.
- Four full-time and three part-time qualified, Social Work England registered social workers with experience in adoption work.
- Two part time Adoption Support Workers.
- One full and two part time Admin and Business Support Officers.

Governance and Management

The RAA is accountable to the Family Adoption Links (FAL) Management Board which is responsible for delivering the agreed vision and will enable partners to have a continuing demonstrable focus on achieving permanence through adoption for Looked After Children. The FAL Management Board is accountable for delivery of services within scope and will continue to provide strategic leadership as the service develops.

The Board includes representatives of each partner and takes decision by consensus. The Board is chaired by a Director of Children's Services (on behalf of the respective Local Authorities) and includes Assistant Directors responsible for permanency. The FAL Management Board will ensure there are clear strategic plans in place to manage future demand, develop quality services, deliver value for money, and achieve appropriate efficiencies and cost savings. The board has appointed a Head of Service for the Regional Adoption Agency who oversees the work of the adoption service in each local authority. The Head of Service reports to the board and is responsible for the delivery of adoption services within each LA. Each partner LA retains its own adoption service manager who is the Registered Manager.

The FAL Management Board will keep members fully informed regarding the progress and performance of the RAA.

Service Functions

The service provides: -

- Recruitment and assessment of adoptive families; including publicity, information giving and attendance at regular drop-in sessions across Leicester and Leicestershire.
- Assessment and preparation of prospective adoptive families, which includes visiting their homes, undertaking a home study assessment, references, checks, and preparation groups.
- Support for approved families awaiting placement. In conjunction with the Children and Families Support Team (CFST), advice, guidance and support to adoptive families during the matching process and post placement; this includes workshops and events for adoptive families.
- Delivering training and educational events and providing guidance for departmental staff that are preparing and supporting children, their parents and carers during the adoption process.
- Provision of adoption support services to adoptive families and birth relatives.
- Facilitation of direct and indirect contact arrangements and in a limited number of cases, supervision of contact.
- Provision of a specialist consultation and advice service.
- Counselling, information, and advice in relation to the following: - Birth parents, (First Families) whose children might be adopted.
- Prospective adopters and Adults who have been adopted, including access to birth records counselling.

Safeguarding Arrangements

Leicester Children's Social Care & Early Help Service and its Adoption Service are part of Leicester's Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements.

The assessment of adopters includes the taking of full employment and accommodation histories. Checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and local authority checks are completed on everyone aged over 18 years of age living in the household. A range of referees are contacted and visited.

Training is mandatory and covers specific areas such as safer caring, the implications of looking after children who have been impacted by trauma and the implications of how a child's attachment may have been affected in their early years.

Allegations that are made against adopters prior to an order being made are investigated using an established procedure by the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). An independent person chairs the initial strategy meeting and oversees the process to ensure its timeliness. Where allegations are made following the granting of an adoption order these are managed using standard Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures.

Recruitment

The Adoption Service welcomes enquiries from people from all backgrounds, whether single, in a relationship, or married, and regardless of sexual orientation, gender, race or religion. There is no upper age limit for a prospective adopter(s), but adopters need to be in good general health with lots of energy and love to give to a child.

In addition to our comprehensive websites, an information leaflet and brochure is available to explain what adoption involves and the processes that prospective adopters will need to go through.

The Adoption Service has a well-defined recruitment strategy whose aim is to prioritise the recruitment of adopters who can best meet the needs of all children requiring adoption.

In addition to our own information on adoption, “First 4 Adoption”, the Government’s ‘adoption gateway’ provides information for those interested in adopting. The national helpline is on 0300 222 0022.

Leicester City Council is a subscribing member of ‘New Family Social’ which is a UK-wide support network run by, and for, LGBT+ adopters and prospective adopters. More information about the support network can be obtained on their website together with clear information about the adoption process.

The role of Adoption Panel

Leicester City Adoption Panel is constituted in accordance with regulations. (Standard 17)

The adoption panel only considers:

- whether a child who is looked after by Leicester City Council should be placed for adoption, where a parent relinquishes their child or consents that adoption is the best outcome for their child.
- recommending whether prospective adopters are suitable to adopt, and
- recommending whether adopters are suitable for a particular child or children (matching).
- the general running of the adoption service and to receive reports giving over-view information about the general running of the team.

Prospective adopters and approved adopters who are to be matched with a child are encouraged to attend the Adoption Panel.

The Adoption Panel is governed by guidance and regulations. Panel members include:

- An Independent Chair
- Independent Vice Chair
- Social workers with experience of adoption and other relevant specialisms
- Medical adviser
- Independent Members (not employed by the Adoption Service and who may have personal experience of adoption or other relevant experience).
- Panel Adviser

The adoption panel meets at least monthly and occasionally twice monthly to ensure the adoption work of the Adoption Agency is not subject to delay.

Following a recommendation by the Adoption Panel, the papers and minutes of the meeting will be passed to the “Agency Decision Maker” (ADM) who has responsibility for decision making on behalf of the Agency. The decisions are made following consultation with the panel adviser and access to the panel minutes. Decisions are made within seven days of the approved minutes of the panel recommendation. The decision will be put in writing to the prospective adopter(s).

Reports on children for whom an Adoption Plan is proposed are considered directly by the Agency Decision Maker after a comprehensive quality assurance process. Adoption Agencies (Panel and Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2012.

Monitoring the Quality of the Adoption Service

The quality of the Adoption Service’s work and standards are regularly monitored: -

- The managers of the service ensure that staff are appropriately skilled, trained and supervised in accordance with the City Council policy to ensure they are fulfilling statutory compliance and meeting the quality standards required by Leicester City Council.
- The work of the adoption team is governed by Adoption Standards, Guidance and Regulations. The Regional Adoption Agency also submits information against national performance indicators.
- The work of the adoption team is monitored to ensure appropriate timescales are adhered to.
- The Adoption Panel independently scrutinise all assessments and judgements made about voluntarily relinquished children being considered for adoption, and those of prospective adoptive parents.
- The Adoption Panel scrutinise all reports on children at the point of matching for adoption. The Adoption Panel has a critical role to play in the provision of independent expert oversight.

- Adoption Panel members are appraised annually, and the performance of the Panel reviewed to ensure that it carries out its role efficiently and effectively.
- The Agency Decision Maker observes at least one panel each year and attends relevant training days.
- The Adoption Service is subject to inspection by Ofsted according to national guidelines.
- Feedback is gathered throughout the process by evaluation and questionnaires.
- Case files are subject to regular internal quality assurance audits.
- The performance of the Adoption Agency is published by the Department for Education on behalf of the Government.

Complaints Procedure

Any formal complaints are considered through the Local Authority complaints procedure. Copies of the procedure and complaints forms can be requested from the Adoption Team Telephone: 0116 454 5440.

All complaints and matters of concern are treated with respect and will be dealt with as promptly as possible, within specified timescales. The adoption service aims to resolve problems in the first instance by informal negotiation. A central record will be kept of all complaints as part of the agency's quality management process; these records are open to inspection by Ofsted.

Children who are already placed in adoptive placements (i.e., children in the care of the Local Authority) have access to the Council's Children's Rights Officer, who will assist any child in making a complaint if they wish and support them throughout the process.

Post Adoption Support

As part of Family Adoption Links, the post adoption support in Leicester is provided by the Children and Families Support Team (CFST).

The team has a range of qualified Mental Health Practitioners, Adoption Support Workers, Social Workers and a Post Special Guardianship Support Worker. These full time and part time workers provide post adoption support services alongside other therapeutic services.

Services to Adopted People

Adults who have been adopted can approach the Registrar General when they are 18 years old and ask for details from their original birth certificate. Once they have obtained this information a request can be made to the service for a Birth Records Counselling Service. This involves obtaining a file from either the local archive or from another adoption agency. This work is provided on a statutory basis.

First Family Support

A requirement of National Adoption Standards is to offer independent counselling to birth parents during care proceedings where a plan of adoption is proposed. Counselling for birth parents, independent of the adoption process is provided in Leicester through the Children and Families Support Team. A leaflet explaining the service is available.

Contact Services

There are now over 550 adoption post box arrangements. The post box enables written (indirect) information to pass between adoptive families and children's birth families via the adoption team. These arrangements provide confidentiality for adoptive families and can sometimes involve the exchange of information from adoptive families between several birth relatives of the adopted child. An email facility is available that is popular amongst adopters for the exchange of indirect contact material.

Of those contact arrangements in place, 2% involve direct contact arrangements which require supervision and support from post adoption support services. A leaflet on the Post Box Scheme is available.

Services to Children

The service provides additional support to parents through the Contact Scheme. We have access to a supply of books, and other media platforms for direct work with children. Counselling is possible with older children. Children participate in social events such as the annual party, summer event and "Play and Stay".

Services to adoptive families

Family Adoption Links keep in touch with adoptive families through our regular newsletter called "Thrive". This provides details of activities and relevant articles about adoption.

The service continues to organise on-line therapeutic training relevant to adopters. The team has restarted a rolling training programme to enhance the understanding of attachment issues as well as develop skills to parent traumatised children. Learning in the company of other adopters is experienced as supportive and sometimes useful on-going contacts are established. Other professionals including schoolteachers, health visitors, adoption panel members and social workers can also attend this training and helps build positive professional relationships which are supportive of adopted children and families.

The adoption support workers provide training to other departmental staff; for example, writing Life Story Books. An information booklet for schools on adoption issues is available to schools attended by children who have been adopted. Training has been provided to schools by the team on attachment issues and how to respond to these. The Virtual School Team (for Children Looked After) can provide additional advice and support in school to assist adoptive children's transition to a new school.

The Service has access to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) through the Young People's Team, to respond to the needs of adoptive families. The Educational Psychology Services from the city and the county also contribute to post adoption placement support.

Adoption Support Fund

CFST undertakes post adoption assessments of need and makes applications to the Adoption Support Fund where appropriate. The Adoption Support Fund enables adoptive families to be able to access therapeutic adoption support, following assessment of support needs after the child is made subject to an Adoption Order.

OFSTED Inspection

Ofsted is responsible for inspecting the Adoption Agency. The last inspection of Leicester City Council local authority children's services took place in 2021. The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers was judged to be **good**.

Ofsted's stated:

Early consideration is given to permanence planning in all situations regardless of the circumstances, including to support reunification with parents. Regular permanence planning meetings help to drive progress and ensure that all necessary assessments are taking place or commissioned accordingly. Delay in achieving permanence for children is rare. Once decisions have been made for permanence for children, these are progressed in a timely manner. This is the case irrespective of which permanence option is identified to be in the best interests of the child. Children's life-story work is sensitively and imaginatively completed for children with permanence decisions, to ensure that they have a comprehensive understanding of their families and experiences.

Recruitment and assessment of foster carers and adopters is thorough, timely and analytical. Training builds their confidence and enables children to be well matched to their carers or adopters.

Ofsted will also receive and may investigate any complaints about the Adoption Service. They can be contacted at: -

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Telephone: 0300 123 1231

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Review of the Adoption Service Statement of Purpose

The Adoption Service reviews the Statement of Purpose on an annual basis to ensure its aims, objectives, services and facilities provided remain appropriate to the care of children and young people. The next review is due in April 2024.

The Adoption Service maintains a comprehensive range of policies and procedures that support the management of the Service, and the care of children.



**Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission (CYPE)
Work Programme 2023 – 2024**

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
11 July 2023	1) Ashfield Centre 2) Introduction to CYPE services	1) Lead Officers to revisit this issue with the view to explore further options and solutions with Ash Field Academy. The Council considers a city-wide review of provision related to the high needs block funding. 2) The key issues discussed be added to the work programme. The Family Hubs item to be added for the next commission meeting.	1) Formal decision called-in and brought back to the commission on 2 November 2) Family Hubs item taken to the meeting on 19 September.
19 September 2023	1) Family Hubs report 2) Children & Social Care – intro to new director and the services. 3) Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) 4) RAAC and Leicester City schools – update 5) Work Programme	1) Recommended to keep on work programme for a report back in 6 months. 2a) Members liked the initiative of a charter for Cllrs to be community champions for fostering within their communities, look forward to this being developed. 2b) A future meeting item suggested on children’s homes, a presentation would benefit scrutiny. 5) The following be added to the work programme and allocated to upcoming commission meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children residential homes - deficit recovery plan - Looked after children placements - Recruitment and social services - SEND and Taxi provision 	1) Added as a suggested item for 27 February 2024. 2a) Added to the work programme – date TBC 2b) Added to work programme – date TBC 5) To be confirmed in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair/officers

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
2 November 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Ashfield Call-in 2) High Needs Block – Verbal Update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Discussion to be had regarding ‘tapering’ of funding. 2a) Data to be provided on the level of overspend at different Councils in next report 2b) Informal Scrutiny to take place following the submission of the full report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Meeting to take place week-commencing 18 December 2023.

<p>19 December 2023</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Safeguarding Annual report 2) SEND transport provision 3) School attendance and exclusions report 4) Update on new in-house children's residential provision 	<p>1a) It would be useful to have a section of statistics showing incidences of safeguarding cases year on year so that it could be seen if cases were going up or down.</p> <p>1b) The impact of potential cuts to Childrens' Centres and any potential knock-on effect could be looked into.</p> <p>1c) Statistics showing early help assessments going down but children in need going up and any correlation between early help assessments and escalation needs to be looked into.</p> <p>1d) Information on the methodology of the audit on home-schooled children to be provided.</p> <p>1e) Ways that young people can be involved to be considered.</p> <p>2a) Application for Government funding for electric school busses to be considered.</p> <p>2b) Figures on how much bursary funding available for post-16 students to be obtained.</p> <p>2c) A similar transport system to the city centre 'Hop' busses to be considered for schools and colleges.</p> <p>2d) Figures on how many SEND children were going outside the city to independent special schools to be obtained.</p> <p>2e) Procedures where a child lives at two addresses to be looked into – particularly</p>	<p>1a) This information will be presented in the 2023/24 yearly report.</p> <p>1b) The partnership has not received information to date re the impact of cuts to Childrens' Centres but this will be considered within this business year.</p> <p>1d) Outline of methodology circulated to members of the Commission.</p> <p>1e) Information circulated to members of the Commission.</p> <p>2a) This is monitored regularly by fleet services and our passenger transport team. Unfortunately there are no grants available at present to support this but we will continue to monitor this to capitalise on any opportunities.</p> <p>2b) Post 16 schools / colleges draw down from a centrally managed fund which is administered by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. Guidance surrounding this funding for schools is available here 16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide 2023 to 2024 academic year - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). As it is not a</p>
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		<p>with regard to which parent/guardian has responsibility for travel arrangements.</p> <p>2f) Consider raising personal transport budgets to reduce taxi use.</p> <p>3a) Absence statistics by Ward to be produced.</p>	<p>council managed fund we do not hold the information surrounding how much total funding is available. Funding ranges between £500 and £1200 per year, per student for those eligible.</p> <p>2c) This is monitored regularly by Transport services, Fleet services and the Passenger Transport teams. Unfortunately there are no grants available at present to support this but officers continue to monitor this to capitalise on any opportunities. The 'Hop' buses are a good example of the focus and effort in this area.</p> <p>2d) There are 217 learners travelling outside of Leicester City to Independent Non Maintained Special Schools in the 2023 / 2024 Academic Year across all ages (as at November 2023). The vast majority are travelling to Leicestershire providers. There is a Commissioning Review underway to improve this situation which is part of a national issue. The SEND Placement Sufficiency Strategy and SEND Post 16 Education Strategies are in development and contribute significantly to this focus area.</p> <p>2e) Local and national policy states that one address is permitted. However, embedded practice in Leicester is to be flexible where there is dual parental</p>
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Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
			<p>responsibility. Travel arrangements are currently split between families / different addresses during the week and the council facilitates that where parents / carers plan ahead with officers. Unfortunately arrangements cannot be changed sporadically as each time a change is made there is a correlating cost.</p> <p>2f) This is currently under review with a specific focus on the most expensive journeys. It will form part of the 2024 – 2027 SEND Home to School and College Travel Policy due later this year.</p>
16 January 2024	1) Update on Ashfield 2) Revenue Budget 3) Capital Programme 4) Youth Justice Plan	1) Cllr Haq be involved in any discussion with the NHS regarding alternative funding. 2) Update from Impower to be brought to the Commission. 3a) Presentation of work done in Schools using capital to be brought to the Commission. 3b) Written response to be provided regarding recent views from MPs and the Local Government Association (LGA) on SEND Provision and Funding.	

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
26 March 2024	1) Education Performance Report 2) Fostering Annual report 3) Adoption Annual report		

Forward Plan Items (suggested)

Topic	Detail	Proposed Date
Fostering Community Champions update	Deferred from 26 March 2024	
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children – Update	Deferred from 26 March 2024	
DSG high-needs block recovery plan	Task Group to happen after DSG Report.	
Corporate Parenting Update	Annual report.	
Looked After Children Placements	To come to first meeting of 2024/25 municipal year.	

Update from Impower	Requested following discussion about costs/appropriateness of placements during scrutiny of the Revenue Budget. To come to first meeting of 2024/25 municipal year.	
Family Hubs Update	Requested in September 2023	
Use of Capital Programme in Schools	Presentation requested during scrutiny of Capital Programme.	
SEN support and funding		
Corporate Parenting Report		
Pupil Place Planning (Primary and Secondary)		
Multi-Academy Trusts - Overview		
Children not in state-maintained schools e.g.: Academies, Independent, Faith schools.		
Early Years Childcare Sufficiency Report		
Youth Services - overview		
Children in Care Council/Care Leavers		
School Holiday Activity and Food Provision		
Education Govt reports e.g.: white paper / green paper		
Ofsted Inspection reports		
Children's Social Care – Recruitment Issues		
Mental Health impacts on children	Likely to be examined jointly with other commissions	
Informal Scrutiny on DSG High Needs Block	To commence following the full report to the Commission.	

Leicester Children's Services – Self Evaluation		
Covid impact and response to early childhood development		