

Headlines- Virtual School Annual Report.

September 2020 – July 2021



Context

- As of July 2021, there were 573 Durham looked after children of statutory school age.
- 48% were of primary age and 52% were of secondary age.
- 45.8% were female and 54.2% were male.
- 81% attended County Durham schools and 19% attend out of County schools. An increase of 3.6% from last year.
- 61% attended a school with an Ofsted judgement of good or better.
- 120 (19%) of children and young people attended a school with a grade of Requires Improvement or below.
- 125 young people attended schools where a current Ofsted judgement isn't available due to a recent academy conversion.

The full report highlights how the Virtual School works with education settings, social care and other agencies to support CLA to achieve the best outcomes for them.. The body of the report also covers those who are in the Early Years and Post 16 Sector.

SEND

- 49% of Durham children looked after had an identified special educational need (SEN) in 2020-21, an increase of 6% from 2019/20.
- 21% of them are supported by an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This has increased by 2% over the last two years.
- 28% had a school SEN Support Plan, an increase of 4% since 2019/20.
- SEMH is the primary need for 39% of Primary aged children and 51% of those in the secondary sector. The VS are proactive in this area and ensure interventions are available for schools to access.
- A challenge for Durham Virtual School is to ensure that the needs of children with a SEN Support Plan are known and strategies put in place at transition points. This is an area of priority in PEP meetings.
- It is important if a child with an EHCP is moved out of the LA due to Care needs that Durham retain the plan for that child until an appropriate setting has been found. Every Durham CLA with an EHCP has an identified SEND Caseworker as well as their CLA PEP Caseworker.

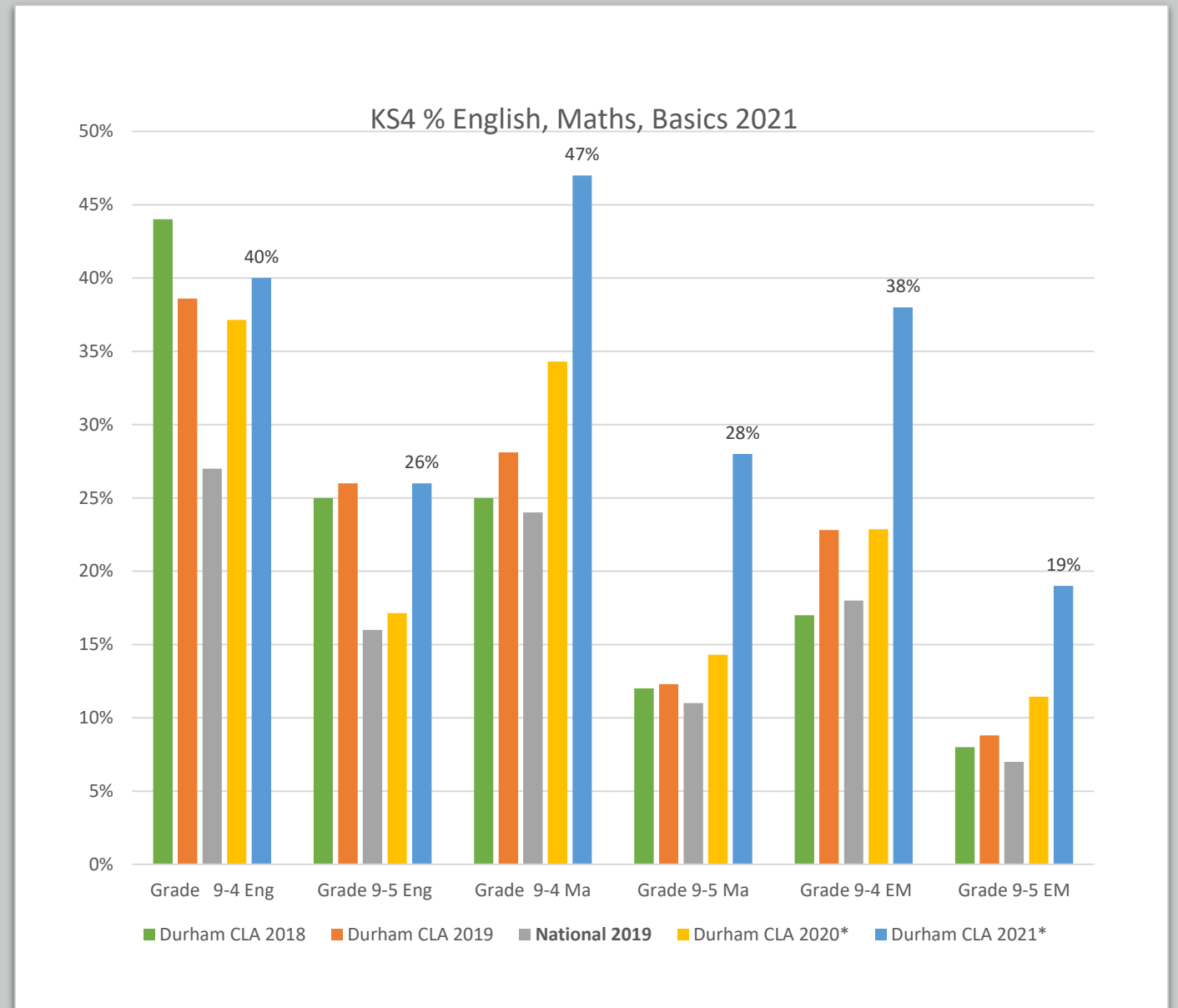
Attendance and Fixed Term Exclusions

The local overall attendance for the whole CLA cohort was 89.3%. This can be broken down as follows:

- Attendance of primary school age CLA (including foundation year group) = 94%
- Attendance of primary school age CLA (not including foundation year group) = 94.1%
- Attendance of secondary school age CLA = 84.5%
- Attendance of CLA in County Durham schools and settings = 90%
- Attendance of CLA in out of County schools and settings = 89%
- Fixed Term Exclusions remain low for Durham CLA. The academic year 2020/21 has seen a rise against the Autumn term 2019/20. Data reflects the full academic year. 5.6% of CLA cohort experienced a Fixed term exclusion, this represents 22 children, 18 were in the Secondary sector.

Other Headlines

- Year 11 GCSE Results:
- Centre Assessed Grades were used. No formal examinations.
- The 20/21 cohort have performed well with some young people achieving strong sets of results.



Priorities for 2021 - 2022

- Work with schools to support children to catch up and assure appropriate use of the Covid Recovery Fund.
- Appropriate curriculum access / bespoke offers when a child requires a different approach.
- Work in partnership to develop clear academic and vocational pathways in preparation for adulthood
- Develop systems to support Post 16 through the ePEP for Year 12 and 13 and avoid NEETs.
- Further raise awareness in all schools and settings of the impact of early trauma and insecure attachment on behaviour and learning and support schools to review policies and implement change. Develop our therapeutic offer to schools through our work with Full Circle.
- Further strengthen links with CICC.
- Ensure the additions to the casework team enhances our offer for children in care through support and challenge for schools.
- Develop the use of the Clear Cut Tool at the entry into care PEP meeting to support CLA through better communication.
- Ensure a robust system is in place to increase school stability through monitoring and challenge.
- Contribute to an increasingly integrated and joined-up process with health and social care teams to provide a holistic and cohesive approach to support readiness to learn by building on the systems developed through the pandemic.