

# Headlines- Virtual School Annual Report.

September 2023 – July 2024



# Context

- As of July 2024, there were 779 Durham children in care of statutory school age. Increase of 1.7%
- 48.7% were of primary age and 51.3% were of secondary age
- 41.36% were female and 58.64% were male (includes Post 16)
- 75.7% attended County Durham schools and 22% attend out of County schools. A slight increase of 0.34% from last year. 2.3% were not in a provision (Care Placements outside of LA)
- 77.8% attended a school with an Ofsted judgement of good or better. 1.8% higher than last year
- 9.6% of children and young people attended a school with a grade of Requires Improvement or below. 2% lower than last year
- 80 young people attended schools where a current Ofsted judgement isn't available due to a recent academy conversion. 12 less than last year

The full report highlights how the Virtual School works with education settings, social care and other agencies to support CIC 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

- 54.81% of Durham children in care had an identified special educational need (SEN) in 2023-24, There is a slight increase of 1.8% in all areas from the figures for the same time last year. This is 3.3% lower than national figures.
- 22.85% are supported by an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). A slight increase on last year
- 31.96% had a school SEN Support Plan, an increase of 1.16% since 2022/23.
- SEMH is the primary need for 45% of the CIC SEN cohort. 19.1% have a moderate learning difficulty, 12.92% identified as autistic and 3.37% a speech and language need. 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.
- Every Durham CIC with an EHCP has an identified SEND Caseworker as well as their CIC PEP Caseworker. Our challenge is finding the correct provision when local specialist provision is oversubscribed. Due to the change in the SEND Code of Practice there will be increased challenges moving forward as new legislation states the EHCP must move out within 15 days when a child moves to a different LA. This brings additional challenge to the Virtual School.

# School Moves

- In 2023-2024 there were 69 school moves during the academic year. 17 more than last year.
- A further 32 were suggested and challenged by the Virtual School and therefore did not take place.
- 25%, (8% less than last year) of school moves were to support moving to a permanent placement or due to distance
- 13% were due to a child leaving care on an Adoption Order or SGO. 4% increase
- 13% were due to a Care Placement breakdown, 7% increase
- 26 % because of a Care led decision, moving the child out of the LA.
- In all cases the PEP Caseworker oversees the move, including agreeing the chosen school.
- The Virtual School Head has oversight of all school moves and the PEP Caseworker ensures they are consulted fully throughout the process.

# Attendance and Suspensions

The local overall attendance for the whole CIC cohort was 90%, almost 1.4% lower than 2022/23 This can be broken down as follows:

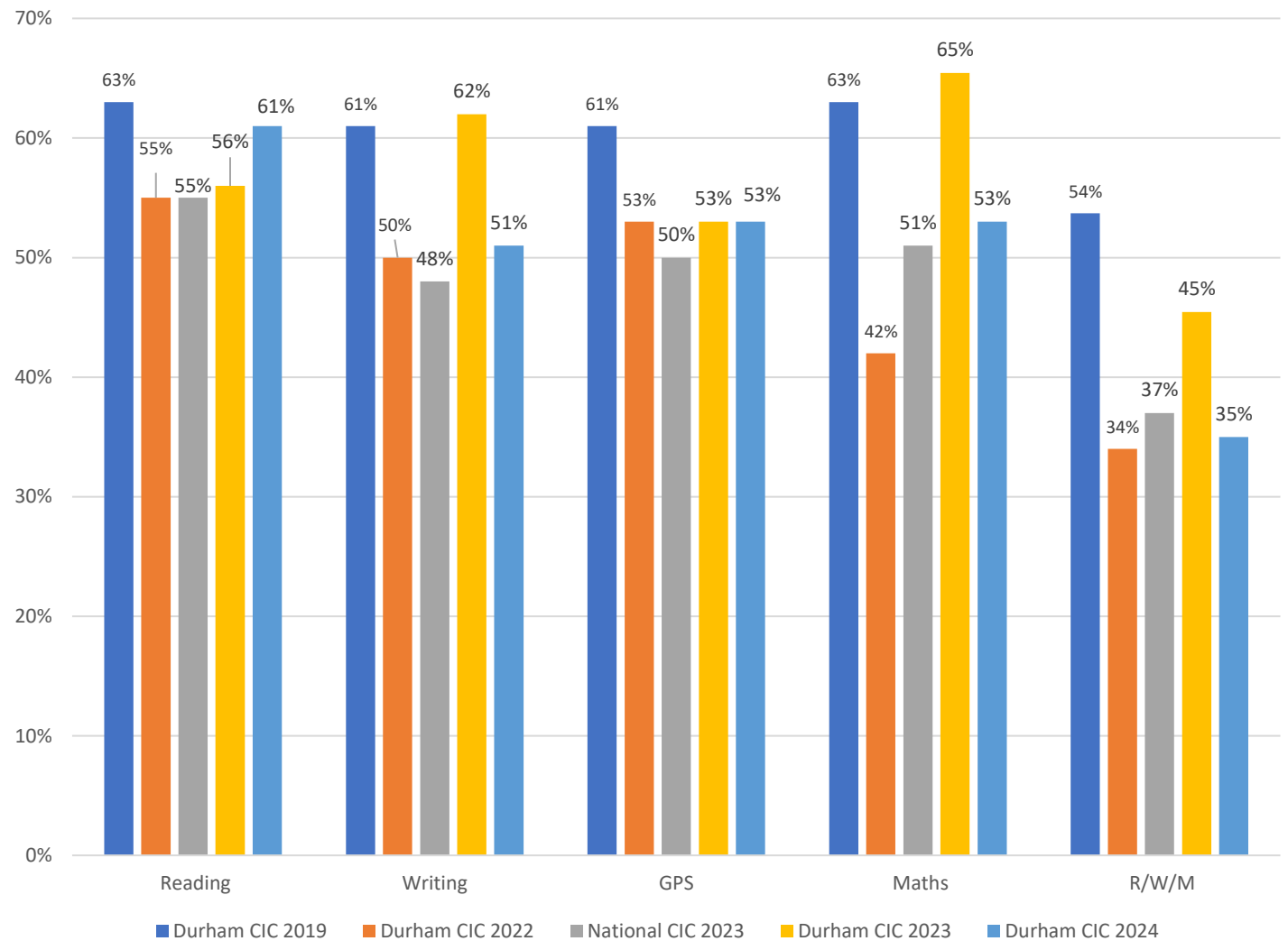
- Attendance of primary school age CIC (including reception, Y1-Y6) = **95%**.
- Attendance of secondary school age CIC = **85%** 1.2% decrease against last year.
- This is due to the fall in the attendance rate for pupils in Year 9,10 and 11. Work with Secondary settings and the EWO for CWSW will be a focus for 24/25
- There have been 2 Permanent Exclusion during 2023/24
- There have been sixty Suspensions
- Thirty-Three children/young people experienced more than one period of Suspension.
- Thirty-Nine children attended the secondary sector, seven were primary aged children, eight children attended Specialist Provision and six a Pupil Referral Unit.

# The Full Report

- Reflects the outcomes for EYFS and Post 16
- Gives detail around Post 16 and what is in place to develop future pathways.
- Identifies the challenges experienced by the VS around Care Placement break downs, school moves and SEND
- Identifies how PP+ is used by schools to support better outcomes for CIC
- Identifies how the SLA we source benefit our children.
- Celebrates the commitment by the Virtual School Team as they champion for our children.
- Identifies our priorities for academic year 2024/25, highlighting those we wish to develop further and those which we have identified as new priorities moving forward, through feedback from all stakeholders.
- The subgroup of the Corporate Parent Committee provide our Governance and are well informed throughout the year.

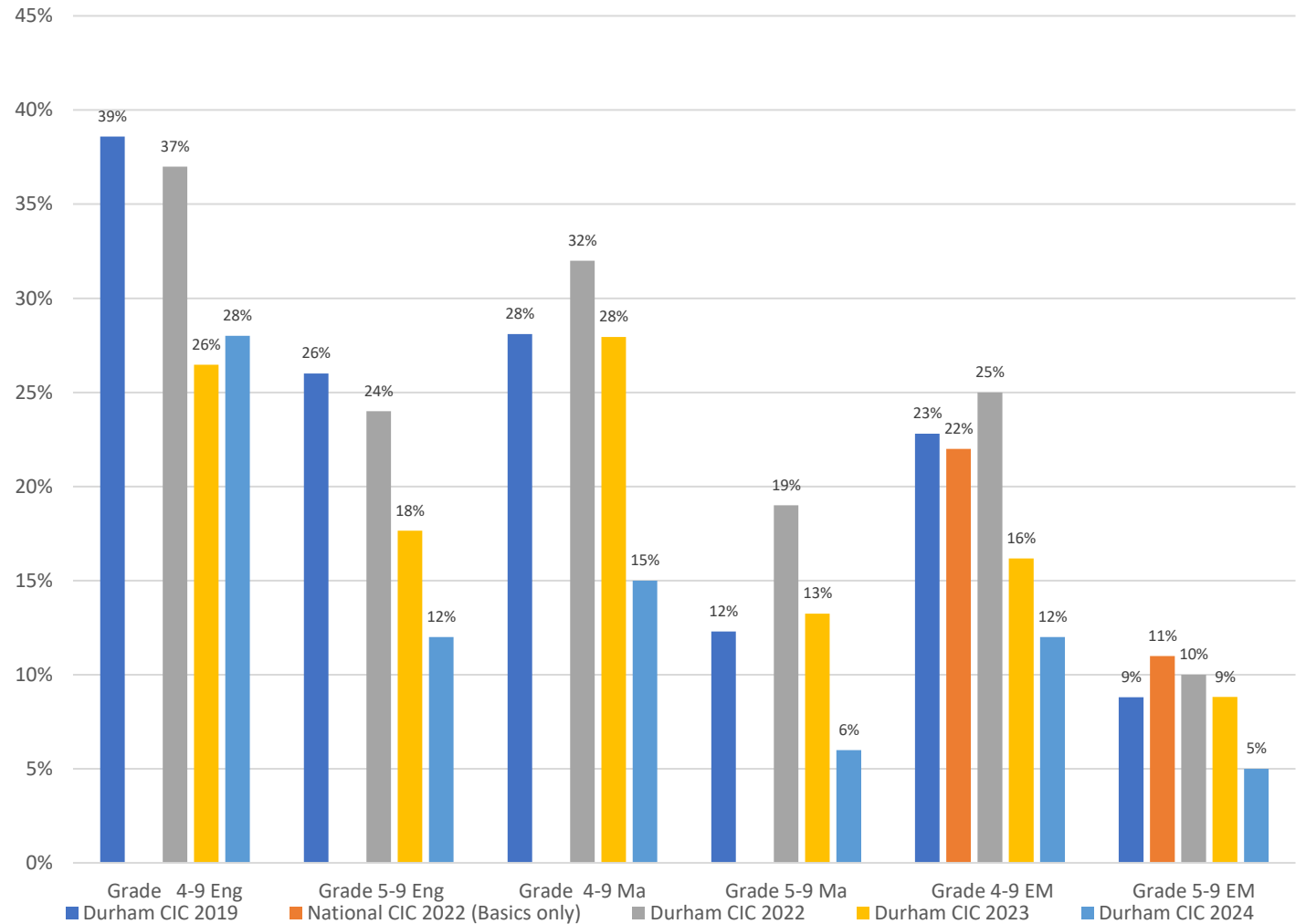
# KS 2 Reporting Cohort 51 children

KS2 % Expected Standards or Better 2019-24\*



# KS4 Reporting Cohort 83 Young People

KS4 % English, Maths, Basics 2024





# Priorities for 2024 - 2025

## Continuing Priorities:

- Increased focus on attendance for CIC. Develop the systems now in place and build upon the contribution of the EWO for CWSW, to support schools, children's homes, carers, and social care when overcoming attendance challenges.
- Support Post 16 to reduce NEET data through a collaborative approach and by drawing upon the expertise within the Progression and Learning Team.
- Further embed the work for Ever6 CWSW through the extended role of the VSH being a strategic lead with this cohort of children.
- 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 whilst ensuring CIC have stability in their education setting. Ensure a robust system is in place to increase school stability through monitoring and challenge.
- Develop work with Children's Homes to support school anxiety and other barriers to education. Drawing on the expertise of the therapeutic services we make available to schools.

## New Priorities:

- Support more children to achieve higher levels or greater depth in KS2 and KS4 through early identification during the Autumn term PEP, virtual school monitoring meetings and the data available through Welfare Call Analytics.
- Embed the agreed process for CIC who require Statutory Assessment whilst working in partnership with SEND colleagues to identify how the LA as Corporate Parents can support our most vulnerable children placed outside of the LA for Care reasons, who have an EHCP.