

# **Merton Council**

## **Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

**11 March 2024**

### **Supplementary agenda**

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# London Borough of Merton Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2022/2023

Issue Date	Authors	Date of the Next Review	Lead Officer
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## I. Executive Summary

This report covers the reporting year April 2022 to March 2023. Children in care and care experienced young people are some of the most vulnerable and marginalised people in society. This reporting year we have noted the impact of cost of living on some of our most vulnerable members of society pushing them further towards the fringes. It is our duty as corporate parents to minimise this impact and shield our care experienced children and young people as much as possible, just as we would the children within our own family networks.

This report is an overview of Merton's Children's Services' performance in meeting the needs of our children in care and care experienced young people.

Highlights from the report are outlined below:

- Merton services to Care Experienced Children and Young People are overseen by a robust Corporate Parenting Board chaired by the CEO and attended by our care experienced young people, councillors, senior managers and partner.
- The overall number of children in care remained steady and remain well below the London and National averages.
- The first constellation of the Mockingbird Family Model of Fostering continues to thrive , with an increase of interest in the Mockingbird Family Model when recruiting new foster carers. The success of the fist constellation has allowed Merton to plan for a second and possibly third Mockingbird constellation
- We had a better year for fostering recruitment with 10 new households being approved up from 6 the previous year.
- Timeliness of Initial Health Assessments continues to be an issue which we are working with health colleagues to address. However, Merton's performance in the number of children with up-to-date review health assessments, dental checks, and strengths and difficulties questionnaire was good.
- Merton remains good at *keeping in touch* with our care experienced young people and ensuring that they are in appropriate accommodation. Our Corporate Parenting commitment is evidenced through the high numbers of care leavers remaining with their former foster carers and *staying put* arrangements. We continue to improve and perform well in comparison to other Local Authorities around the numbers of care leavers, particularly with our 19 –21 year olds we have in education, training, and employment.
- Merton's '*Our Voice*' continued to be a strong presence in ensuring that children's views influenced decisions by elected members and senior officers. They launched a new logo and had a number of trips, this year. Our Young Inspectors were successful in a bid to facilitate peer research as part of the Young Londoners Research Programme.
- An update on Coram Voice *Bright Spots Survey* was completed in March 2022; with a focus on *Your Life Beyond Care* and the *Children in Care* and family time. Following a successful bid, Merton joined the Staying Connected pilot delivered by Coram Voice. The project looks to creative ways in which councils can adapt practice so that children in care can have increased contact with their birth families, brothers and sisters

## II. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the services delivered to Merton's children in care and care experienced young people. The report covers the performance and

comparative data for the 2022/2023 reporting year.

### The Corporate Parenting Board

The main purpose of corporate parenting boards is to ensure and monitor how the Local Authority are applying the 7 principles of corporate parenting set out in *Section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017*<sup>1</sup>. This legislation is accompanied by the DFE statutory guidance for local authorities - *Applying corporate parenting principles to looked-after children and care leavers*<sup>2</sup>. The guidance encourages corporate parenting boards and local authorities to assess and monitor the quality of services through understanding the experience of the children and young people accessing them.

Merton's corporate parenting board is held 4 times a year; with a view to incorporate a 5<sup>th</sup> board that acts as an Away Day for the board and is comprised of care experienced young people, elected members, senior managers from across the council, the NHS, and the CCG. During this reporting year it was chaired by the council's Chief Executive, Hannah Doody, promoting a strong corporate parenting ethos across the Council and the wider children's partnership.

### Context

This reporting year of 2022/2023 has been seen as a settling year following on from the recovery year caused by Covid-19. We know how quickly childhood goes and we have continued to aspire high for our children and young adults whilst focusing and maintaining outstanding practice. Continuous improvement is a strongly held value within the Corporate Parenting service and more than ever, the workforce demonstrated this over this reporting period.

In February 2023 the government published its strategy and consultation on children's social care Stable Homes Built on Love (SHBoL). This strategy for reform set out proposals in response to recommendations from Josh MacAlister's Independent Review (Care Review) of Children's Social Care (2022), the Child Safeguarding Practice Panel's National Review into Child Protection in England (2022) and the Competition & Markets Authority (CMA) Children's Social Care Market Study (2022). The proposals set out in 'Built on Love' to be backed by additional investment to existing spending over the next 2 years, and organised under 6 'pillars' of reform:

1. Family help provides the right support at the right time so that children can thrive with their families
2. A decisive multi-agency child protection system
3. Unlocking the potential of family networks
4. Putting love, relationships and a stable home at the heart of being a child in care
5. A valued, supported and highly skilled social worker for every child who needs one
6. A system that continuously learns and improves, and makes better use of evidence and data

We will continue to stay up to date with the upcoming changes in in guidance and strategy to

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<sup>1</sup> [Children and Social Work Act 2017 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

<sup>2</sup> [Applying corporate parenting principles to looked-after children and care leavers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

support the sufficiency of homes for children in Merton.

The year was seen out with a stable senior leadership group of Hannah Doody - CEO, Jane McSherry - Director of Children Life Long Learning and Families, Dheeraj Chibber - Assistant Director of Children’s Social Care & Youth Inclusion, and David Michael as Head of Corporate Parenting. Following the major restructure and pandemic related disruptions of the previous year, the Corporate Parenting service experienced a year of relative stability. The restructure achieved its desired outcomes in aligning services related to care experienced children & young people under the one Corporate Parenting Service, increasing the management capacity to deliver quality practice, and creating clear progression pathways for the workforce. The Corporate Parenting service has a mostly permanent workforce with a stable management team that came about due to promoting talent internal to Merton who understand Merton’s high aspirations for our children which led to the ‘Outstanding’ Ofsted rating following the February 2022 inspection.

*Merton’s Pledge to our Children and Young People*

Merton’s pledges are outlined in our Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-2024 which is accompanied by an action plan that is monitored through the Corporate Parenting Board. Our pledges mirror the desired outcomes for all Merton’s young residents that were developed by our Young Inspectors and the Children’s Trust and published in the Children and Young People’s Plan 2019 – 23<sup>3</sup>.

Corporate Parenting Pledges	Children’s Trust Outcome
Your voice will be heard, what you say matters.	Getting involved, having a say.
You will have somewhere safe to call home.	Staying safe.
We will help you with your worries and fears.	Being Healthy
We will do the best we can to support you, so you can do your best at school, have hobbies, interests and time for fun.	Enjoying and achieving.
We will make sure you have people in your life who are important to you and someone you can trust.	My Merton.
We support you to learn how to take care of yourself and we will be there for you, if you need us, right up until you are an adult aged 25.	Becoming independent.

<sup>3</sup> [Merton Children and Young People's Plan | Merton Partnership](#)

Corporate Parenting Performance Activity 2022-23

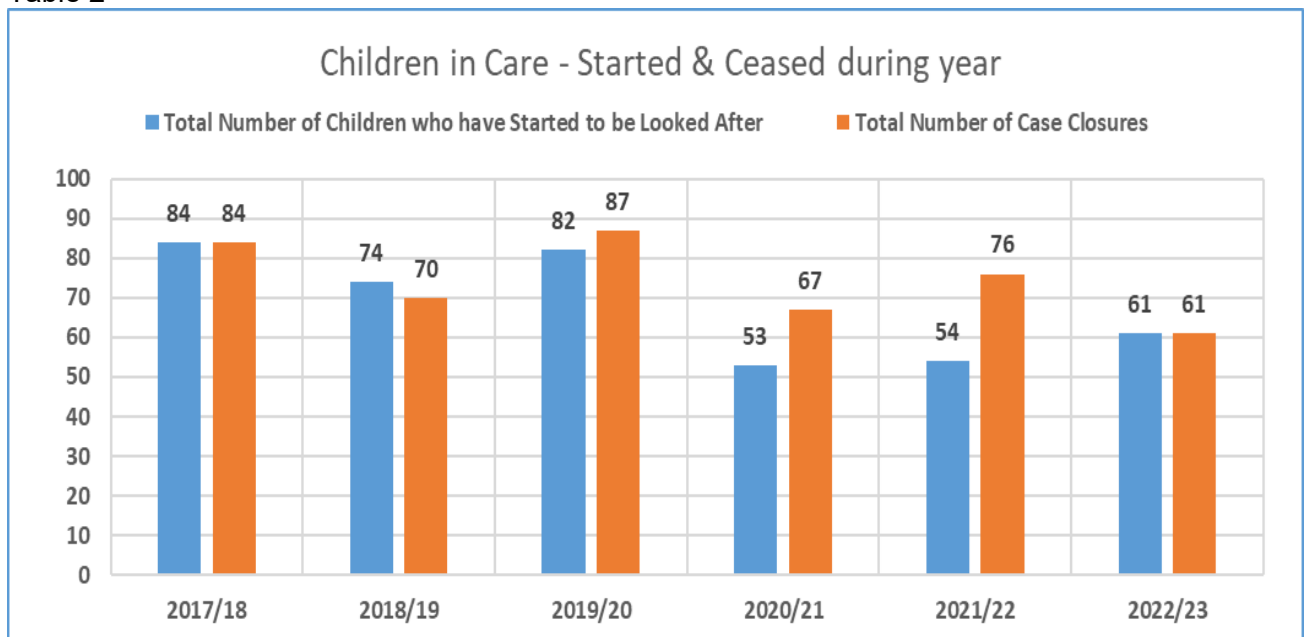
Table 1

Numbers and Rates of Children in Care as of 31st March

	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
	Number	Rate/10K	Number	Rate/10K	Number	Rate/10K	Number	Rate/10K	Number	Rate/10K
<b>Merton</b>	159	34	154	32	142	30	122	26	123	26
<b>London</b>	10020	52	10020	52	9640	50	9940	52	9710	51
<b>National</b>	78140	66	80000	68	80770	69	82080	70	83840	71

Up until 2020, the numbers of children in care had remained stable between 150-160. Between 2020 and 2022, the numbers decreased to 122 where they remained stable throughout this reporting year. Merton’s rate of children in care per 10,000 children (26), remains lower than the London and National rates (51 & 71 respectively). Although the pandemic contributed towards the mentioned drop between 2020 to 2022 due to less unaccompanied asylum-seeking children entering care, but this drop also correlated with the implementation of Merton’s Relationship based practice model. Merton’s focus on supporting and enabling families to find solutions to ensure children grow up within their family networks, and only using care as a last resort, has resulted in less children entering care. The table below shows a general decrease in the numbers of children starting in the 2020/21 reporting year which correlates with the implementation of our practice model. Since this period it has stayed relatively stable. Various quality assurance work has also been undertaken due to the changes of pattern to ensure we are confident of our practice and children are being kept safe, entering care when threshold are met, whilst also exploring family networks and communities to look after children who may not need to remain in care.

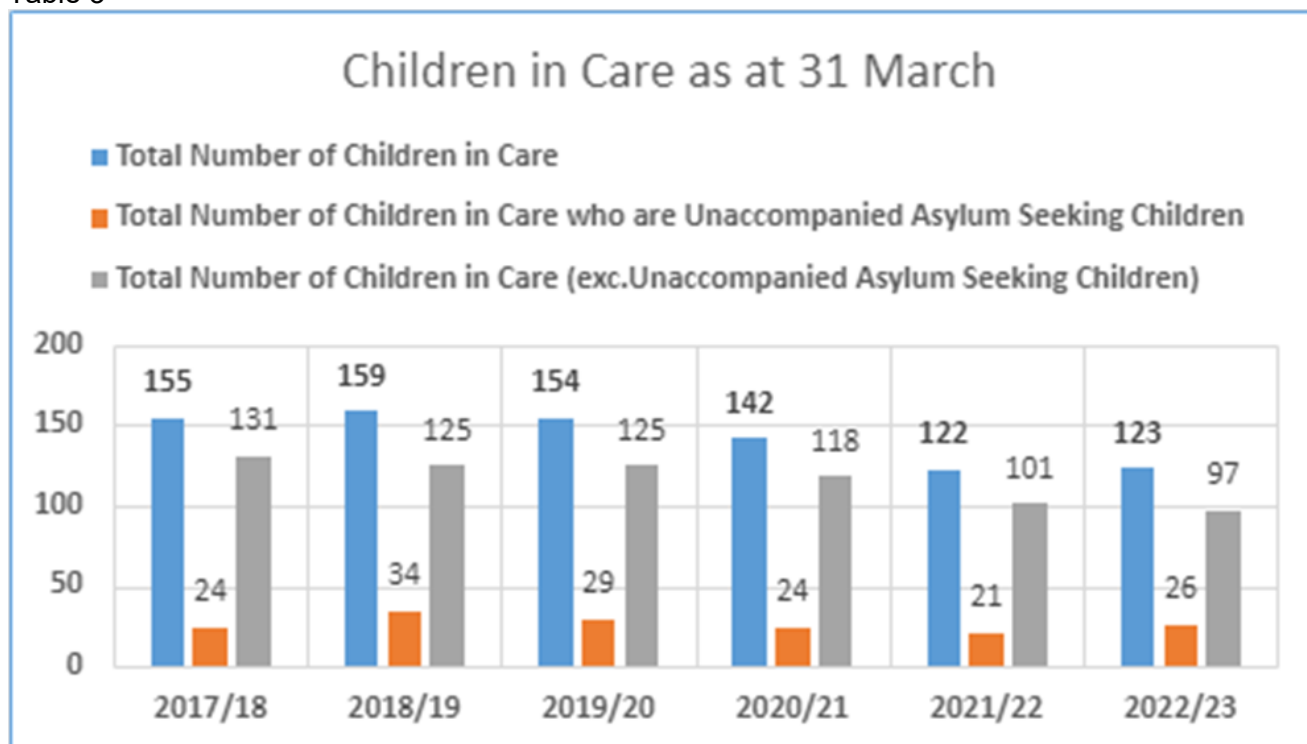
Table 2



\*It should be noted that this chart represents a count of individuals who have started / ceased care during the year and does not count multiple start or ceased dates for individual children.



Table 3



The table above shows the numbers separating out the unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. 2020/21 & 2021/22 saw the numbers decrease due to the pandemic. The numbers this year have risen but a significant, expected, increase was avoided due to the National Transfer Scheme becoming mandatory. This move by the Central Government followed the predicted increase in unaccompanied children due to the rising numbers of asylum seekers widely reported in the national press. The quota of how many unaccompanied asylum-seeking children councils have to accept also increased to 0.08 of the population. For Merton this meant an increase from 38 to 48 children. Merton remains well below our quota.

Table 4 below compares Merton with our statistical neighbours. We remain significantly lower than most the other boroughs in the table. All the London boroughs in the table (to note Reading is not a London LA) bar Enfield are below the London average of 52 per 10,000 children. Whilst there may be many contributing factors to this, we know that there is a strong link between poverty and involvement with children’s social care. Research from the most recent census Trust for London on poverty (2021) shows that Merton has the lowest rates of poverty in London.

Table 4

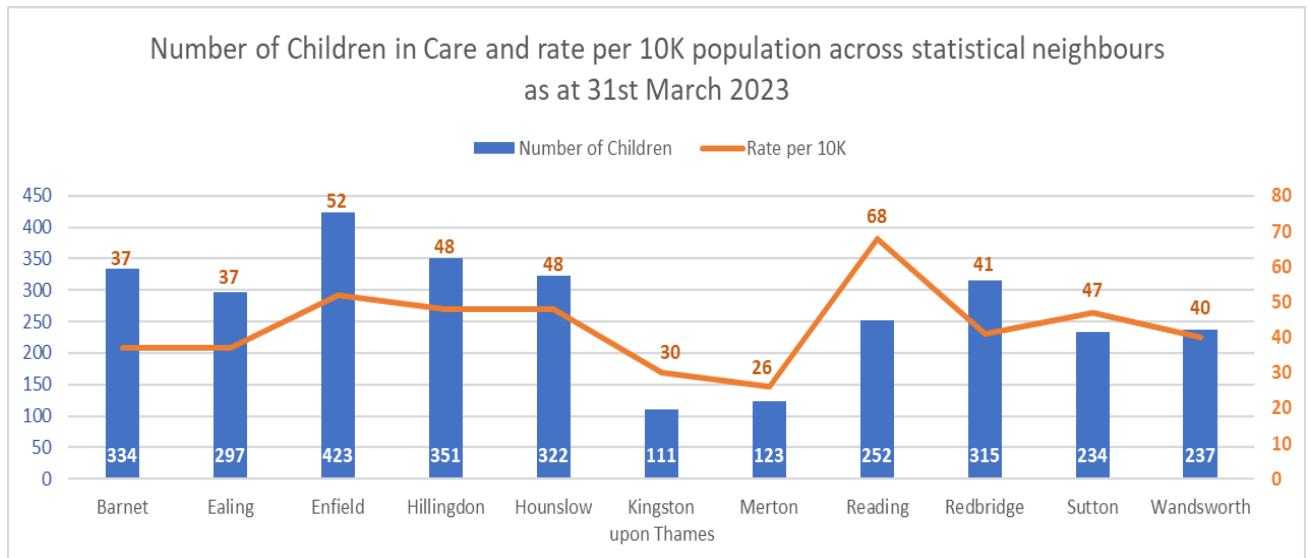
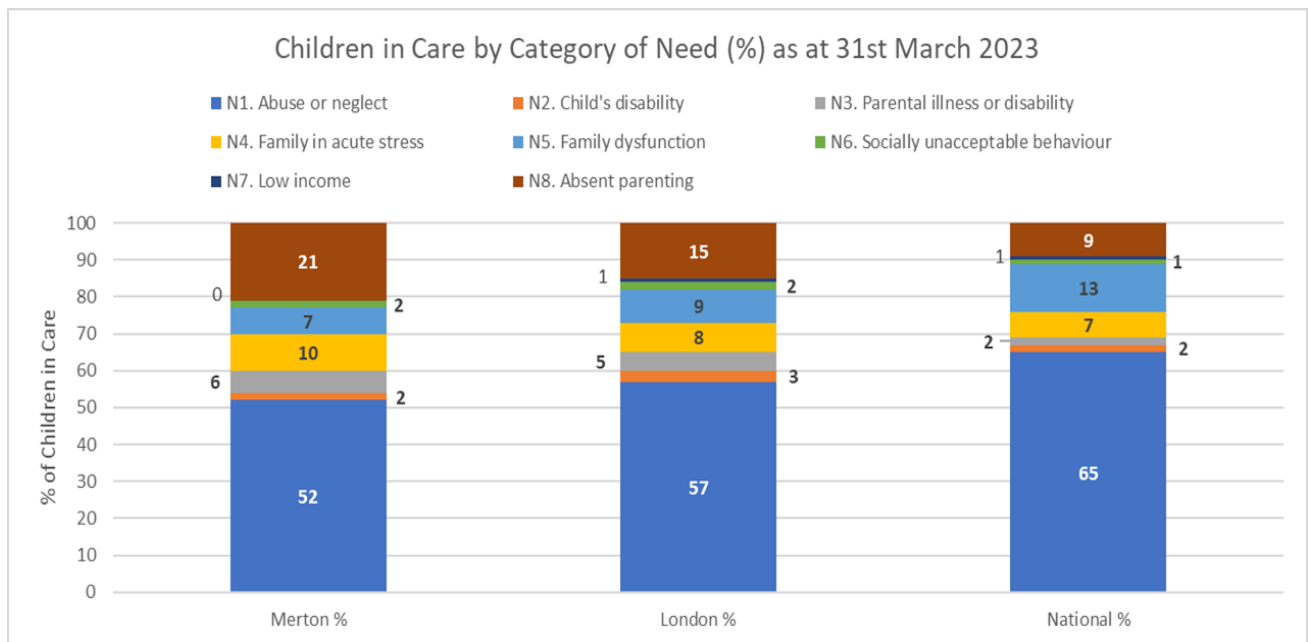


Table 5



The above is a comparative graph showing the reasons why children entered care. Merton is roughly in line with the London wide picture. The higher level of absent parenting is linked to the increase of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. There remains a significant difference between London and the rest of the nation around abuse and neglect and absent parenting. This is most likely due to the higher number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children accommodated by London boroughs which are recorded as absent parenting. Given that the National Transfer Scheme has now become mandatory, we may start to see this balance out over the next few years.

Table 6

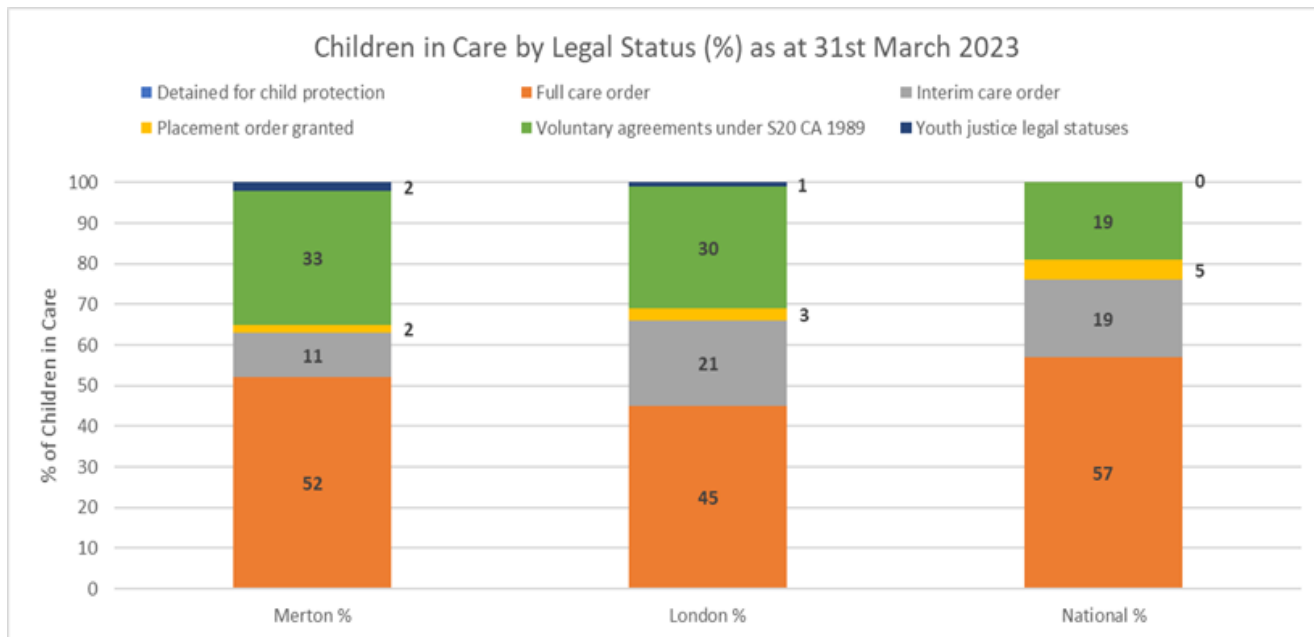
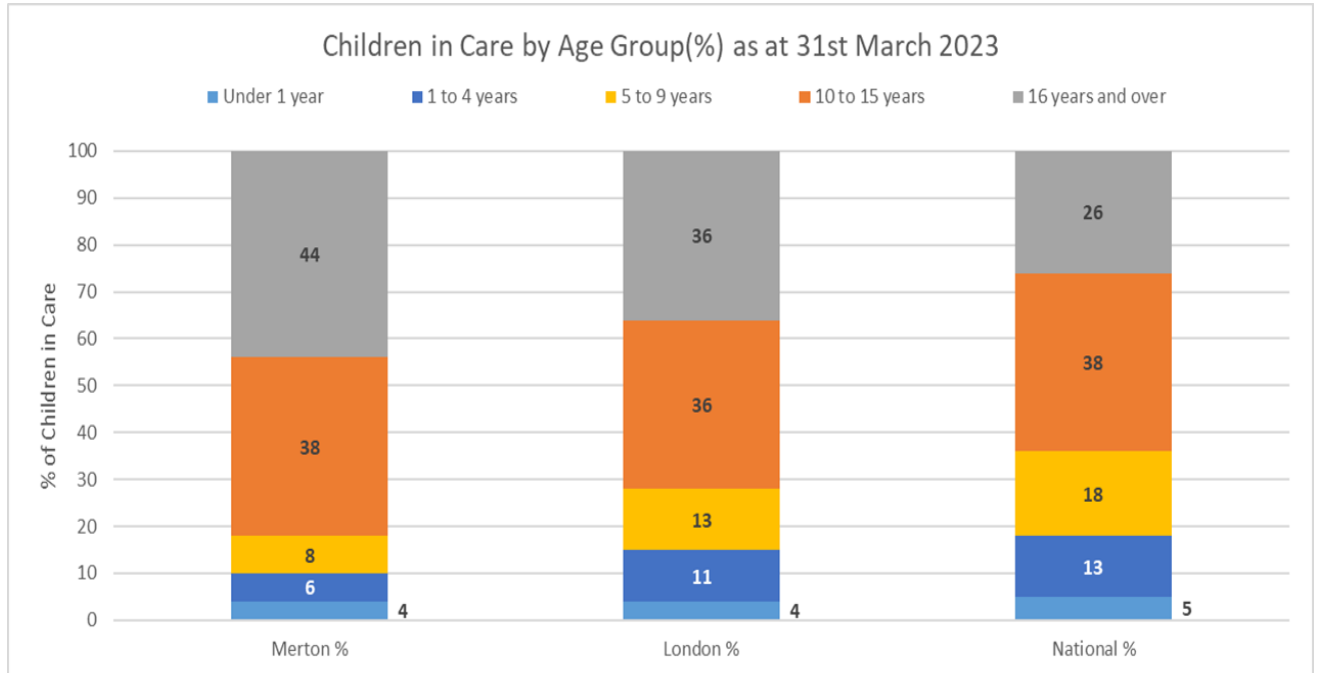


Table 6 shows that Merton had 11% interim care orders which is lower than the London (21%) and National (19%) average but ultimately shows a 5.3% rise in interim care orders from the previous year (5.7%). The disparity between London and Nationally around use of Section 20 is predominately around the higher number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children London accommodates. Table 6 shows that there has been a decrease in the number of Full care orders from 59% in previous year to 52%; where Merton remained higher than the London average. There has been a raise in children who have entered care under Powers of Police Protection or Emergency Protection Orders. This is a change for Merton which we will continue to explore and monitor.

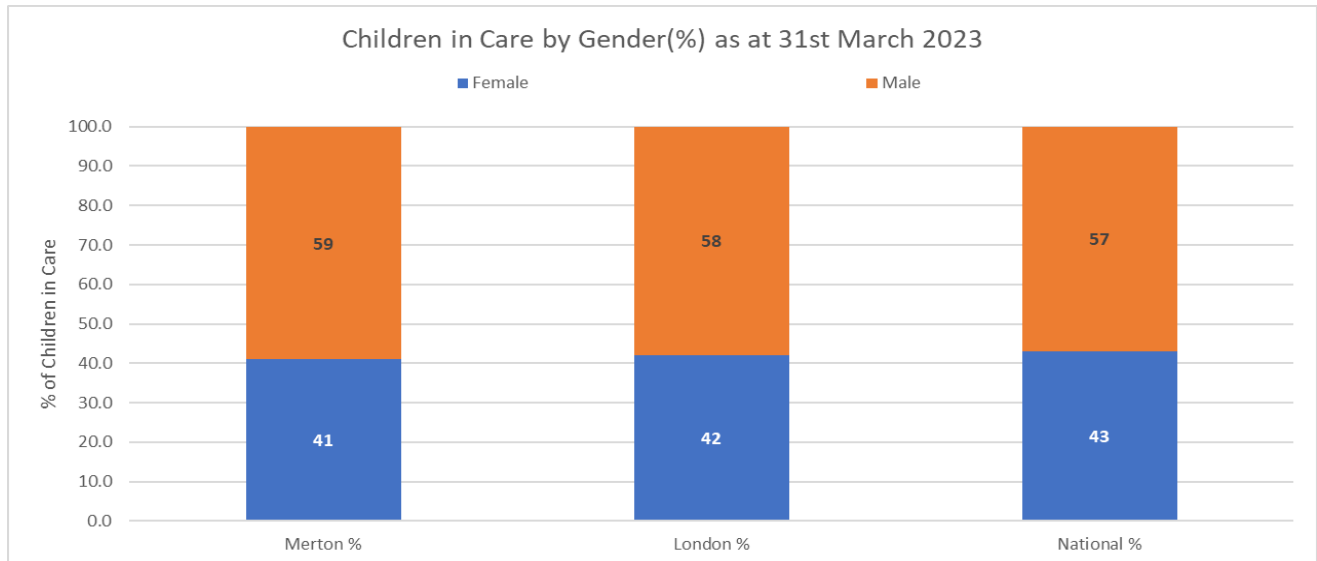
## Section 1: Demographics

Table 1



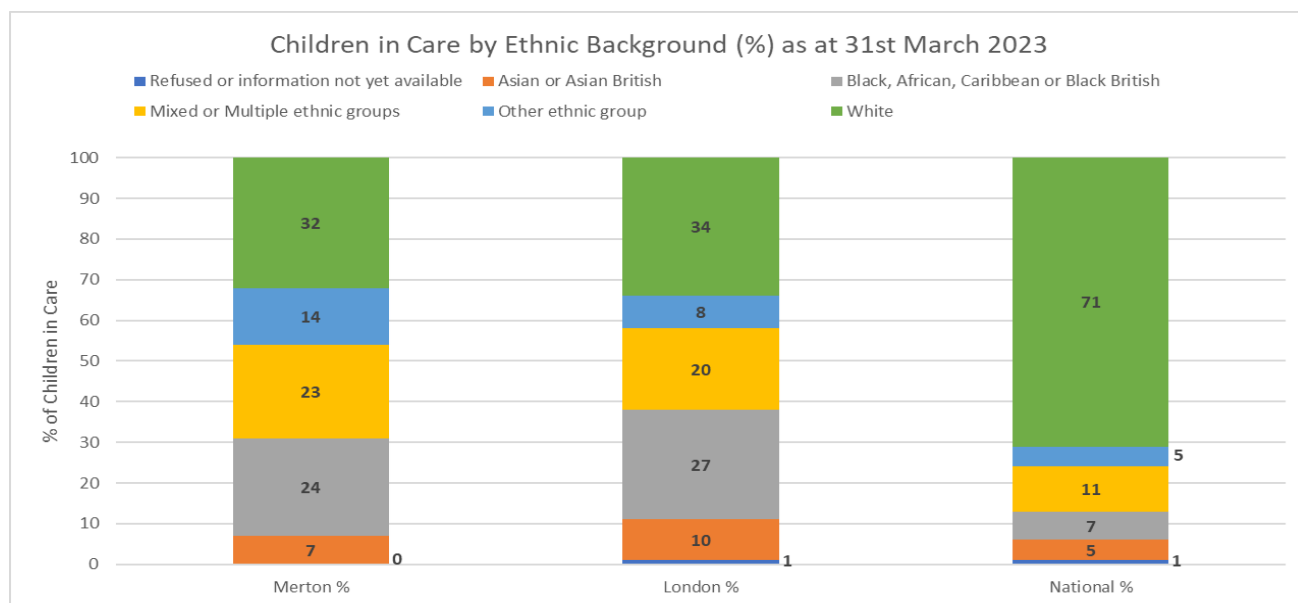
Merton is in line with the national trend of seeing more children enter care in late childhood. This is particularly stark in Merton in comparison with the London average; at 36%. Merton saw an increase from 36% in the previous reporting year to 44% in this reporting year. This snapshot shows that Merton has seen a reduction in the % of 10–15-year-olds from the previous year (46%), which now brings Merton in line with the national average for this age group at 38%. With Merton sitting below the national average with for all age group other than 16 years and over.

Table 2



Merton’s ratio between male and female is in line with the London and National picture. The higher level of males is attributable to a significantly higher number of 16- and 17-year-old males entering the care system.

Table 3



Black children and young adults are overrepresented in care. Conversely, children identifying from an Asian ethnicity are underrepresented. Both trends are reflected nationally. Whilst there is thought about the work local authorities can do with respect to identifying the causal connections to these demographics, the combination of factors in society including systemic disadvantage, systemic racism, and a lack of trust in statutory services in some cultures to report concerns and/or access services are likely to be underpinning factors. The over representation in 'other' ethnicities is due to our ongoing commitment to accept unaccompanied minors seeking refuge within the UK.

#### IV. Section 2: Care Processes

We strongly believe children have the right to, and should grow up with, their families. Our early help, child in need and child protection services strive to affect positive change within families and empower them to find their own sustainable solutions where children are safe and can thrive.

##### Pre-Proceedings

When we are very worried about the trajectory of children living with their families and our interventions have not been successful in supporting the family to make enough positive change, we will enter pre-proceedings as a last attempt to affect change and divert the need for court proceedings.

During the reporting year we entered pre-proceedings for 11 families (20 children). This was an increase from the previous year when we have issued proceedings for 7 families (11 children).

##### Care Proceedings

During the reporting year, we issued proceedings for 14 families, consisting of 20 children and concluded proceedings on 16 children. Positively, 6 of those children either remained or returned to the care of their parent and one was able to stay within their family network under

a Special Guardianship Order. Of the 8 children receiving a Care Order, we were granted a Placement Order for 1 child meaning that they can be placed for Adoption.

Table 4

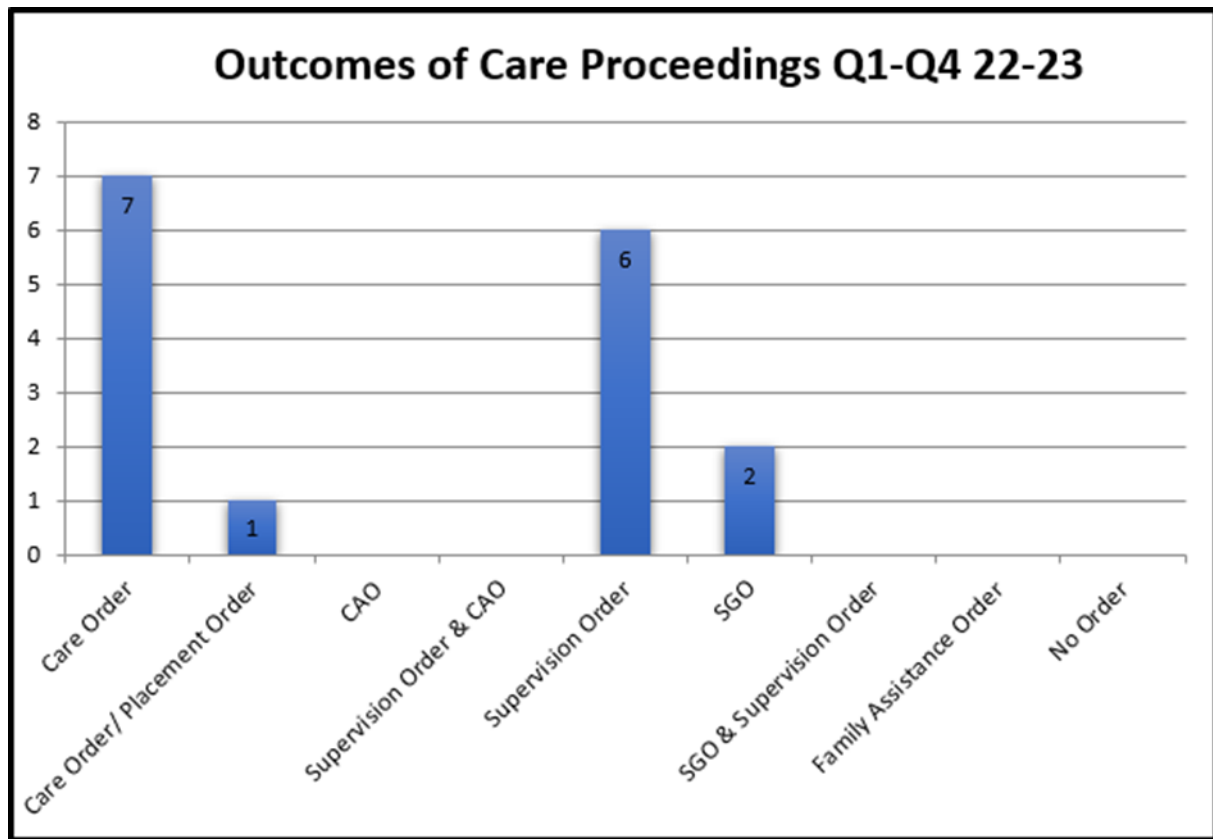
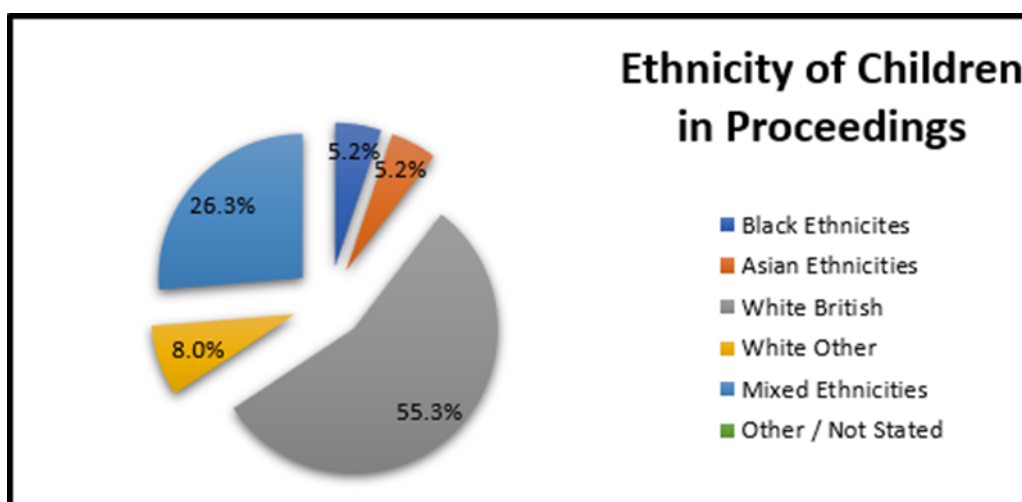


Table 5

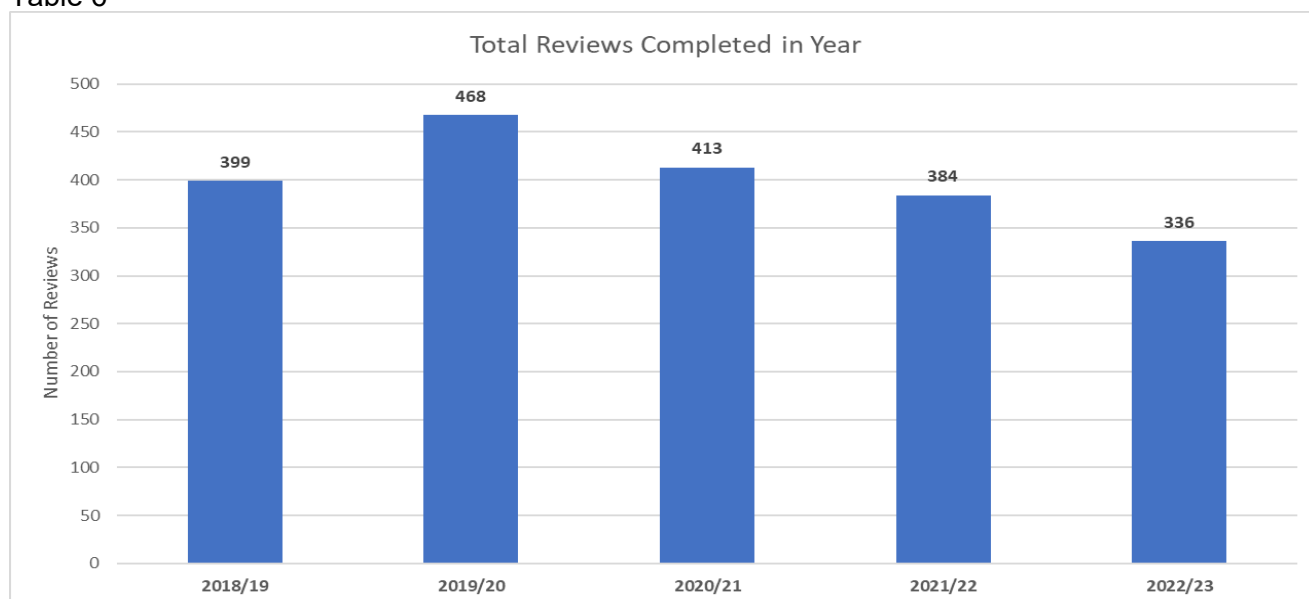


We continue to challenge our interventions and ensure that families of Black and Asian backgrounds do not experience disproportionate statutory interventions without adequate early interventions. Our data currently indicates that families of Black, Asian and Mixed

ethnicities are not overly represented in care proceedings for this period.

### Children in Care Reviews

Table 6



The above graph shows the number of reviews were undertaken in the year. We continue to strive for a good prominent level of oversight from the Independent Reviewing Service and for reviews to be held within statutory timescales.

Table 7

Method of Participation at Review	2021/22		2022/23	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
PN0 – Child Aged under 4 at time of review	40	11%	44	13%
PN1 – Child physically attends and speaks for him/her self	216	57%	181	54%
PN2 – Child physically attends and an advocate speaks on his/her behalf	5	1%	8	2%
PN3 – Child attends and conveys his/her views symbolically (non-verbally)	1	0%	2	1%
PN4 – Child physically attends, but does not speak for him/her self, does not convey his/her views symbolically (non-verbally) and does not ask an advocate to speak for him/her	4	1%	6	2%
PN5 – Child does not attend physically, but briefs an advocate to speak for him/her	6	2%	4	1%
PN6 – Child does not attend, but conveys his/her feelings to the review by a facilitative medium	64	17%	65	19%
PN7 - child did not attend and views not conveyed	35	9%	26	8%
Not recorded	6	2%	0	0%

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>100%</b>
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The above table shows that 92% of our children were able to have their views shared and participate in their reviews, demonstrating a commitment to ensure children and young people are representation well during their reviews.

### **III. Section 3: Permanency and A Place to Call Home**

*'You will have somewhere safe to call home'* and have a stable home, is a Merton Corporate Parenting pledge which is central to us achieving our ambitions for our children and young people. Whenever it is possible and safe enough, we will strive to keep children within their family networks. Only when this is not possible will we look at adoption and if this is not achievable or in the child's best interest, will we consider long term foster care.

#### Adoption

Following the central government mandate to regionalise adoption services, on 1 July 2019 most of Merton's adoption functions were transferred to Adopt London South (ALS), alongside eight other South London local authorities and regular practices have been established. The Permanency Lead who moved to the Corporate Parenting Service post the restructure is also the Adoption Link with Adopt London South and has regular meetings with the ALS designated link. The post holder continues to work closely and has a strong working relationship with the social work teams to support our children whose path for permanence is adoption.

During the year, 4 children were adopted. The average time between these children entering care and moving in with their adoptive families was 125 days and below the national average. This was lower than the previous year. The average over the last 3-year period was 312 Days. No children from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic community were adopted at the end of the reporting year. There were 3 children with placement orders waiting to be adopted.

We reported nationally on one additional child who was adopted within this reporting year via exceptional circumstances. This child's adoption was the result of being placed with their foster carer after the break down of their special guardians in 2014. After being permanently matched with their foster carer and being very happy and settled in her care, in 2020 the child and carer expressed a wish turn their fostering arrangement into an adoption. Because of the child's age and the support of all parties, the adoption order was made through private proceedings and there was no Placement Order or Agency Decision required. For this reason, the Adoption is not included in our measures on timeliness.

#### Children with Plans for Long Term Foster Care.

There has been a focus on permanence over the previous 2 years. A lot of work was undertaken to ensure meaningful permanence planning meetings were taking place for children and Life Story Work was being undertaken to ensure children had an understanding and positive narrative of their journey into, and through care. Training has continued to be provided through our internal training offer established by the Permanency Lead and a lead within the independent reviewing service to place a greater emphasis on Life Story as children journey in the care system. The training offer will continue to be developed through our vision of having expert by experience trainers, so that young people with care experience can support

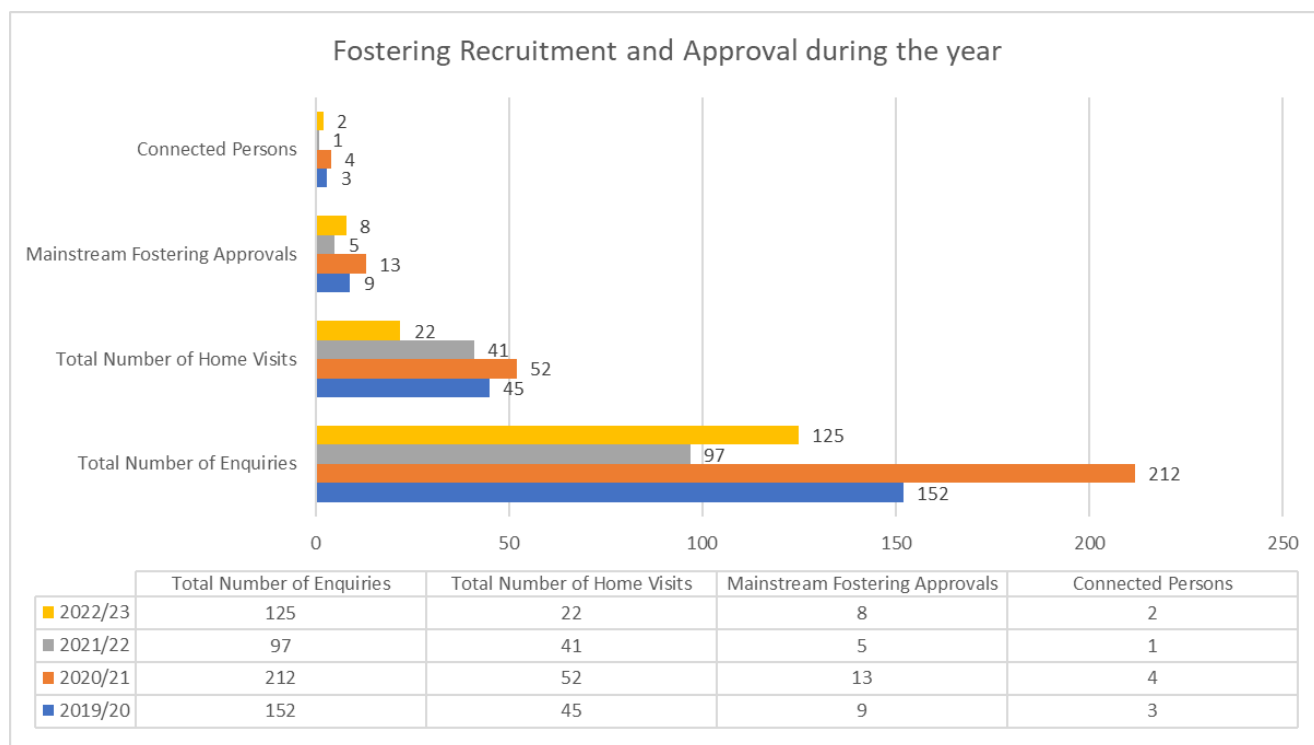


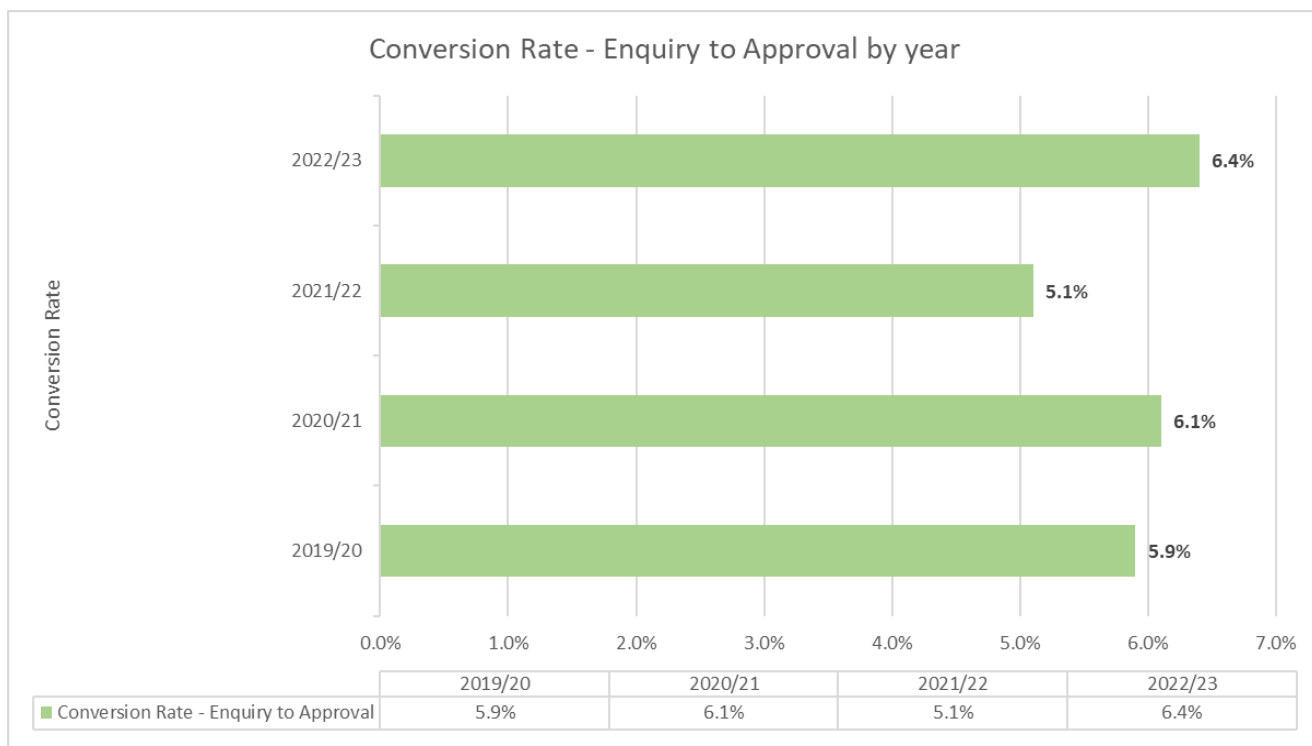
the workforce across the department to deliver exceptional life story work.

Following this focus on permanency, the service was delighted that our dedication to pursuing timely permanence for all children if they cannot live safely with their birth families was recognised as a strength by Ofsted. The network around a child holds a permanency planning meeting for all children who are not yet matched with their long-term carers which occurs every 6 weeks a part of practice. Qualitative audits show evidence of direct work and life story work being undertaken with children in care. The importance of meaningful direct work and the link between this and achieving permanence is well understood in the service and we will continue to improve on our practice.

### Fostering Recruitment

Table 8





The 2022/23 saw an increase in the number of enquiries and approvals from the previous year. Merton has a dedicated, part time, fostering recruitment officer who links in with the Commissioning Alliance which has 35 Local Authorities as members and The London Permanence Partners. Both these groups look to share ideas and best practice around fostering recruitment and consider how we can work together to meet the challenges faced in placement sufficiency.

For the first part of the year we saw very low levels of enquiries from April to October 2022, and this was compounded by the reduction on marketing spend, however in October 2022 to the Fostering Recruitment Team received an increase in the marketing spend which saw an increase in the number of enquiries; between October 2022 to February 2023 which was there were 85 enquiries.

Merton Fostering Recruitment Team has worked hard to meet the challenging demands of various socio-political and economic events, such as the war in Ukraine and the Cost-of-Living Crisis through our innovative and cost-effective marketing strategy.

The national shortage of foster carers is well documented, and the service continue to think more creatively than ever around our sufficiency strategy. We continue to be a part of the Commissioning Alliance which allows us to share ideas and best practice and think creatively about how we address recruitment challenges.

### Fostering Support

Children are cared for in a variety of settings; foster care, children’s homes, residential special schools, and a small number are in hospital settings. Some children in our care are placed in secure settings. On 31 March 2023, 85% of children were placed in foster care, 63% of those children were living with our in house foster carers.

At the end of March 2023, we had 64 approved foster households (59 mainstream and 5

connected carer households), which was a decrease on the previous year when we had 76 fostering households (59 mainstream and 5 connected carer households). Currently there are 19 care experienced young adults still living in their inhouse foster homes under 'staying put' arrangements, which was an increase on the previous year when we had 14 care experienced young adults.

Our Mockingbird Constellation, launched in September 2021 and continues to thrive with the first constellation launched in September 2021. The objective of the Mockingbird Programme is to provide a structure conducive to developing the capacity of foster carers both as a family unit (satellite home) and in the context of a community (constellation) to meet the identified needs of children, young people and families. The model's structure is designed to address specific systemic gaps found to be particularly damaging to children and young people in care including active safeguarding, placement stability, sibling contact and birth family involvement. To remain in Mockingbird Fidelity the constellation must have between 6 to 10 satellite homes and support 6 to 18 looked after children and young people. The number of foster carers in the Constellation fluctuated between 6 – 8 within the period April 2022 – March 2023. In April 2022 we had 6 fostering families in the Constellation, this increased to 8 fostering families in May 2022 and 12 children within the constellation.

The Hub Home carer organises monthly activities for the Constellation which the Liaison worker attends. Within this reporting period there have been 12 activities; one per month to which the children particularly enjoyed going; bowling, meals out and the trip to Tottenham Football Stadium. The Hub home carer also organises sleepovers. In September 2022 the Constellation celebrated the Moscars (Mockingbird Oscars) in which each of the children and young people were nominated to win awards and their successes were celebrated. We plan to continue this celebration event annually.

The strength in the Constellation during this time period was that the Hub Home Carers and Satellite Carers had built strong relationships, they were committed to being part of Mockingbird and felt supported. Due to the success, in 2024 we are planning to launch two more constellations.

### *Children and Young People Living in Other Settings*

Whilst we believe children should grow up in a family setting, we also realise that all children are unique, and that we must have a wide range of options to meet their needs. For the small number of children whose needs we were unable to meet in a family home, our Access to Resource Team (ART) will find the best possible residential children's home to meet their individual needs. As of 31 March 2023, we had 1 child living in residential care home due to having a disability that requires a higher level of care than foster care can provide and 8 children living in a residential children's homes. The increase in the number of children placed in a residential setting is likely related to increase of the number of children coming into care and the complexities of these children requiring additional support outside of a foster care family.

For a small number of older children who have a proficient level of independent living skills and neither want nor need family-based care or a children's home, supported independent accommodation (SIA) can be considered. SIA usually takes the form of a bedroom in a home

with 2-3 other young people who share communal living spaces and have key work support. SIA provision is legal and is an important placement option for young people needing a stepping-stone to having their own tenancy. However, as this provision is not yet officially regulated by Ofsted the variability in quality between provision can be significant. To mitigate the risk of unregulated provision, we have embedded our own internal quality assurance process for SIA's accommodating our children. We also only use SIA accommodation that is 24-hour staffed. In Merton, we only ever have a small number of 16- and 17-year-olds living in SIA provision as part of their plan. At the end of this reporting year, we had 4 young people living in SIA provision, which was a decrease from 5 the previous year.

Nationally, because of the shortage of residential care and foster homes, local authorities are sometimes forced into using SIA provision to accommodate children who require *care* when no appropriate regulated accommodation can be found. Merton has found itself in this position increasingly over the reporting year, however still placing a tiny number of children in these provisions. As of 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2023, Merton has no children placed in SIA accommodation whose needs required a regulated children's home.

### *How Far Our Children Live from Merton*

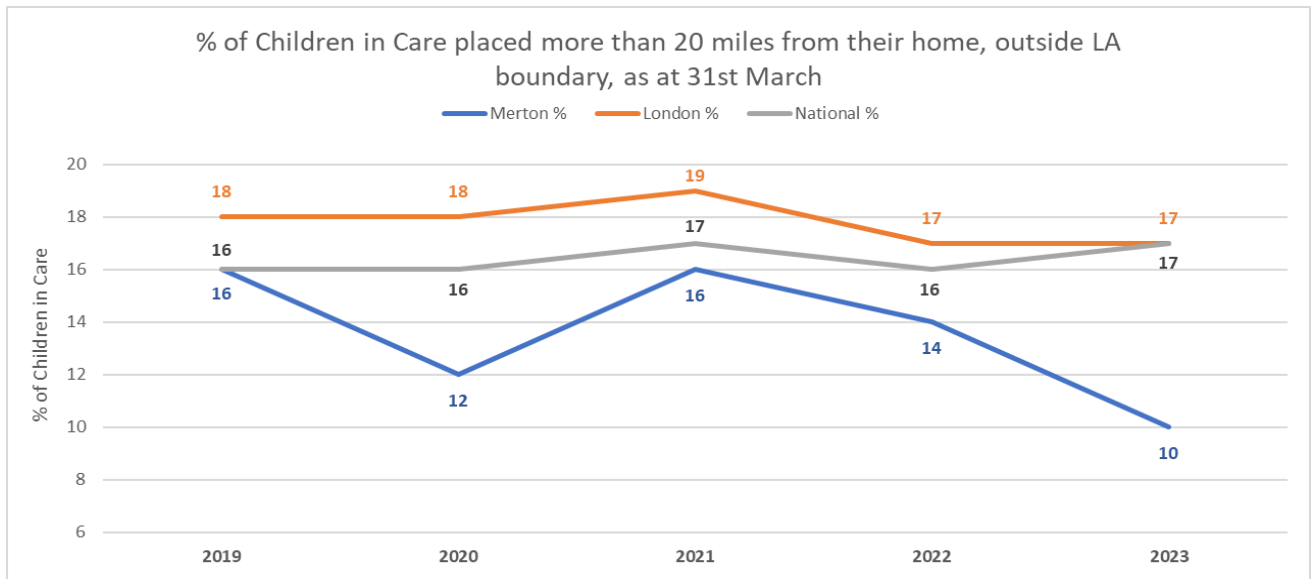
We always try to keep children living either in or as close to Merton as possible. There are many advantages to this, with the most important being to make ongoing meaningful contact between children and their birth families/networks easier to nurture. However, it is also advantageous to use Merton's own resources to meet the needs of our children including schools, health, housing, and mental health services. For this reason, our Sufficiency Strategy is always focused on creating more placement options and greater capacity within Merton.

Unfortunately, sometimes it is either not possible or not in the child's best interest to remain living in Merton. For some children, especially younger children who we are matching for long term foster care, we may prioritise the quality of a match between a child and foster parents over the geographical positioning. For some teenagers, we may not be able to protect them in a local community from adults wanting to exploit them and may decide that a period of living away will benefit the young person and help professionals to engage them in appropriate interventions to achieve the best outcomes for them outside of Merton. Unfortunately, for some children with very complex needs there are occasions where there is no local provision which can meet their needs.

We recognise the importance of having close relationships with neighbouring and other London boroughs to collectively tackle sufficiency and continue to be a part of collaborative commissioning programmes. Currently we are members of The South London Commissioning Programme and London Permanency Partners consortium.

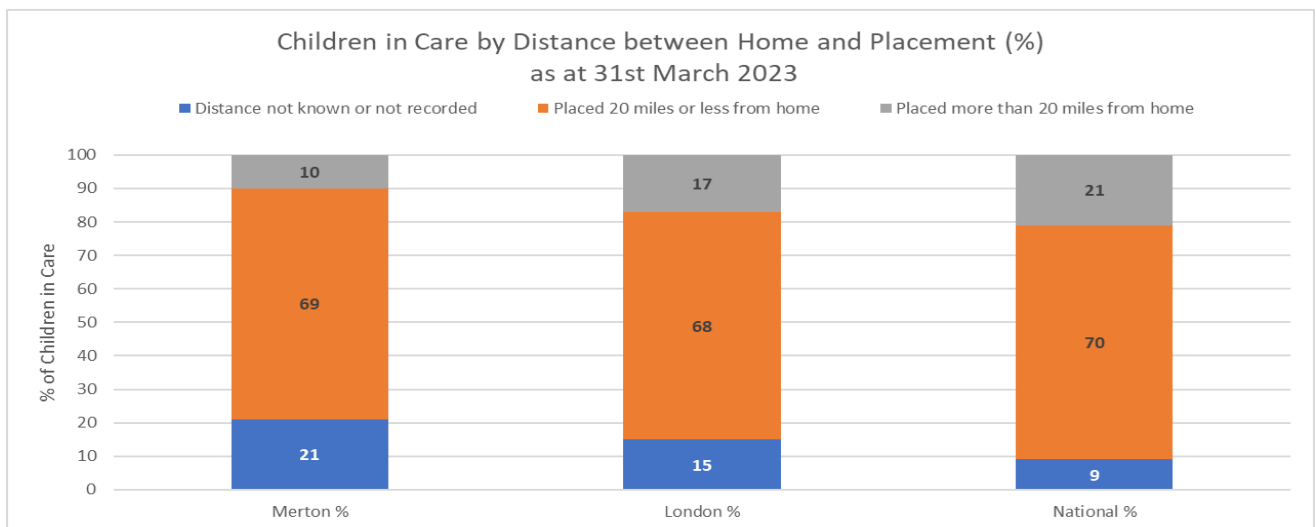
Placement Location

Table 9



However, Merton is not alone in these challenges. Positively this year Merton saw another decrease which is against the London data which saw an increase. We are ambitious about continuing this trend and are currently looking at actively developing more post-18 accommodation in borough for care experienced young people via a new project in refurbishment of Caretaker properties. The table below shows that we perform well in comparison to our London neighbours and nationally.

Table 10



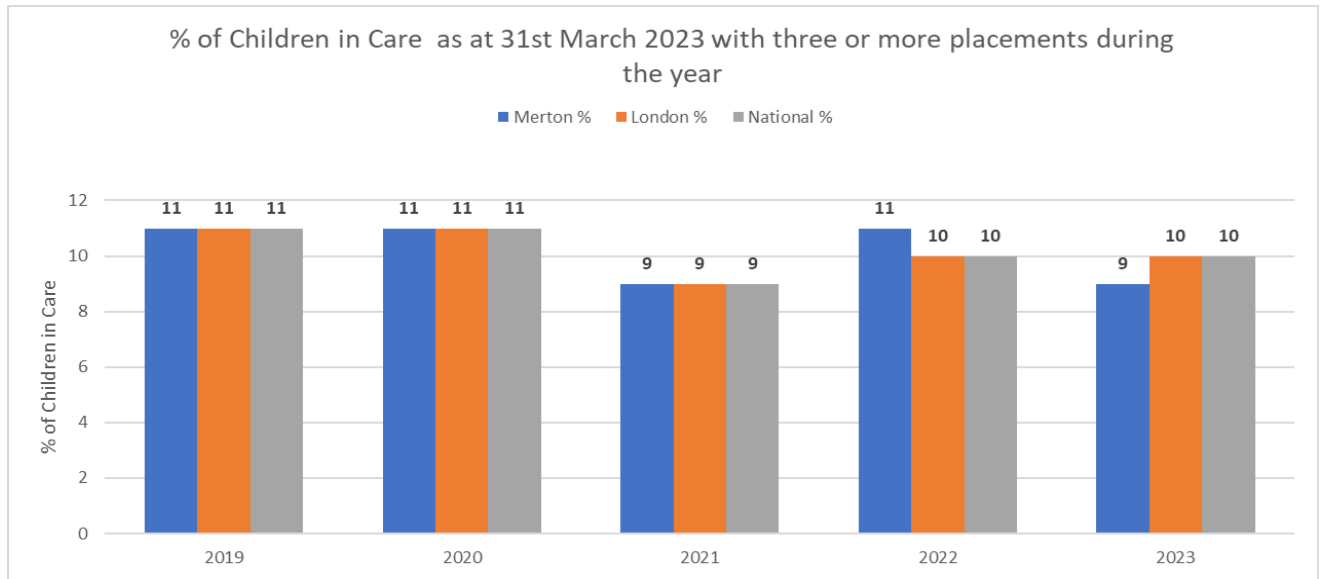
\*'Distance not known or not recorded' includes unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

### Placement Stability

All our efforts to improve how effectively we achieve permanence for children is based on the principle that providing a child with a stable, loving home is key to them thriving and growing up to live happy, full lives. Our dedication to achieving stability for our children is what inspired us to invest and build upon the Mockingbird Model of Fostering as discussed in the fostering support section. With a projected plan for 2024 to launch two more constellations will help improve the stability of our foster placements and strengthen the relationships between carers,

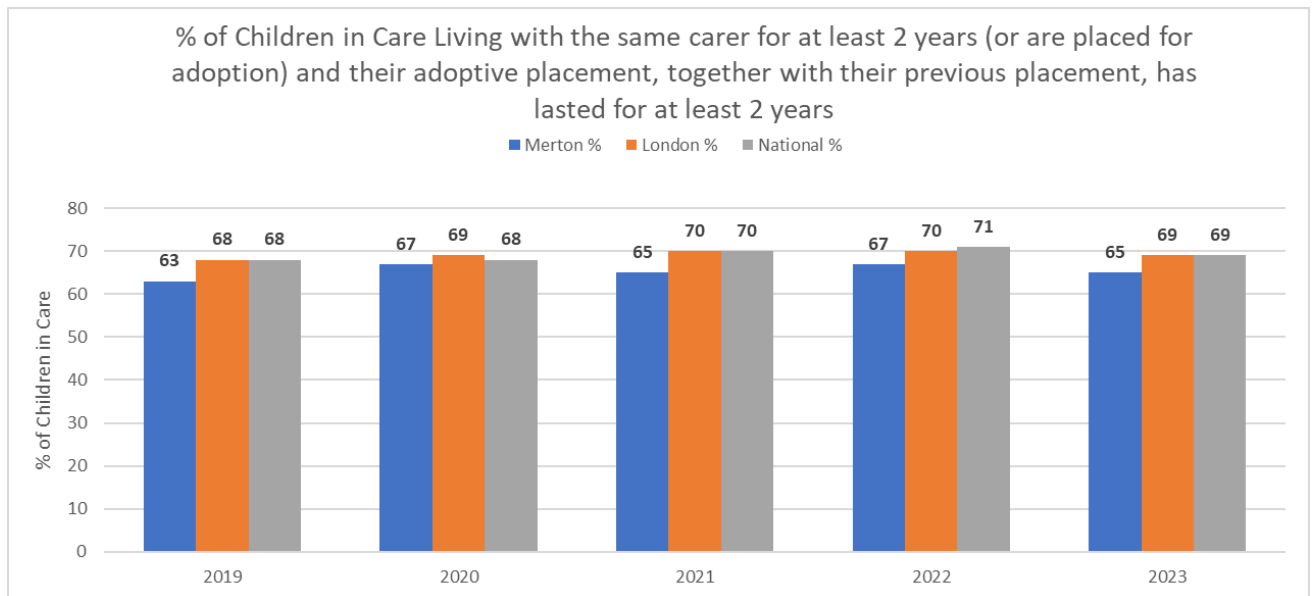
children and young people, fostering services and birth families.

Table 11



The above graph shows that we are in line with London and National figures of children who have experienced 3 or more placement moves within a year.

Table 12



\*Includes children looked after continuously for at least 2.5 years at 31 March aged under 16 years

Permanence and stability through children having a sense of belonging, feeling they have a home and being loved is at the forefront of our ambitions. All children who haven't achieved permanence have regular permanency planning meetings which are tracked through fortnightly meetings chaired by a service manager. Fragile placements are monitored at the weekly Children in Care monitoring meeting chaired by the Head of Service to ensure robust operational work is being undertaken to ensure the best possible outcomes for children which align to best practice and Merton values.

#### **IV. Section 4: Health**

The data to inform the The Health Annual Report 2022/2023 won't be published until end of March 2024. The report will contain further details and in-depth data with respect of health outcomes for our children in care. This will be shared a subsequently the Corporate Parenting Board in June 2024.

We have some data to report on for the purposes of this annual report. Initial Health Assessments (IHA) are delivered through the Epsom and St Helier NHS Trust are performed by the Community Paediatric Team at St Helier and Epsom Hospital Trust. We know that during this reporting year children receiving their IHA in timescale were not at the expected level. This is an area that the partnership is striving to improve. Significant improvements were achieved in the timeliness of paperwork through the implementation of weekly monitoring meetings. Unfortunately, these improvements remained a challenged with the NHS experiencing significant staffing at Epsom and St Helier's, in addition to a new challenge with regards to parents refusing to sign consent. Partnership work is ongoing to ensure we see improvement in IHA's.

Review Health Assessments (RHA) are undertaken by the Looked After Children Nurse who works for the Central London Community Health Care Trust, but is co-located in Merton's Civic Centre with the social work teams. RHA's are considered within timescales if seen up to 6 weeks after the due date. A breach is where a child or young person hasn't received an appointment for a health assessment within the statutory timeframe. The Review Health Assessments (RHA's) are completed by the Looked after Children's Nursing Team for children over the age of 5 and some by the Community Paediatric Team for children under the age of 5. We know that all RHA during that reporting year remained 100% of children were seen in timescales (Excluding exceptions). This is above the national and London averages and is a testament to the commitment of our dedicated looked after care nurses. What is unique to Merton is that our Looked After Children Nurse will travel outside of the recommended radius to see our children to ensure wherever they are they are able to have a review health assessment and build a relationship with our Looked After Children Nurses.

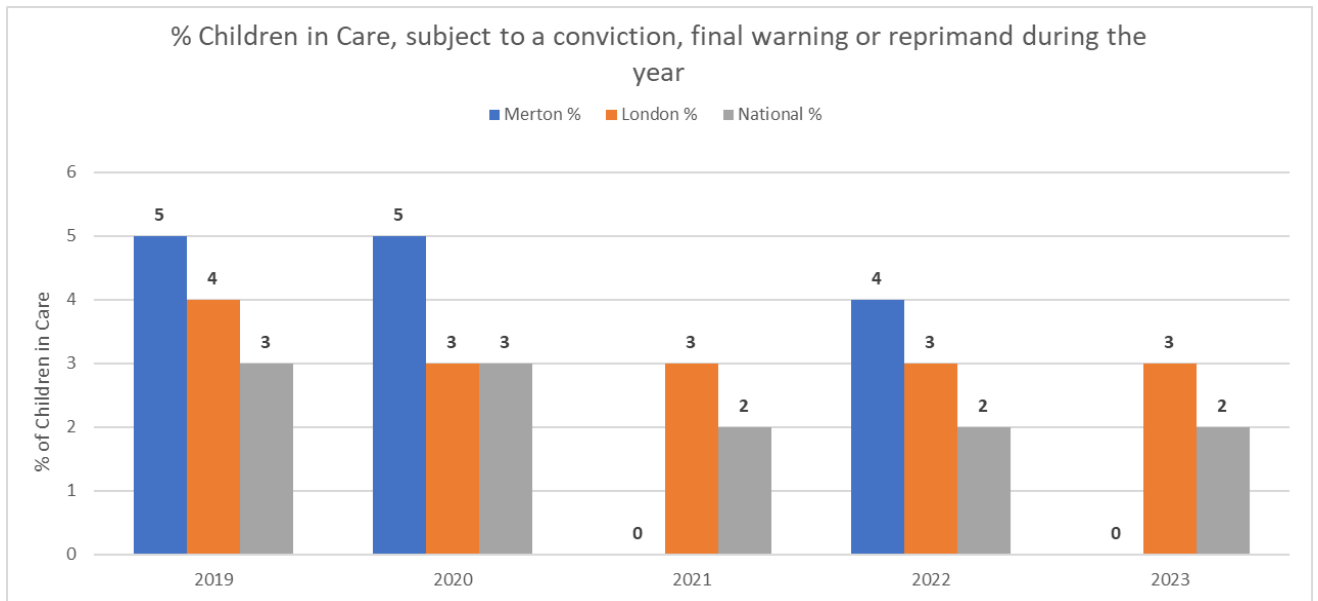
Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQ) are sent out to all children, carers and schools for children between the ages of 5-16 years old. SDQ are tools used to assess and monitor children's emotional well-being. Encouragingly we achieved 80% completion which was above the National average of 75%.

#### Section 5 Offending

Merton had 0 children subjected to a conviction, final warning or reprimand. Merton's very small numbers of children in care over the age of criminal responsibility (79), a single child receiving an order can have a significant impact on our statistics. In the last six years, Merton have continued to have no more than 4 children in care receive a substantive outcome through the criminal justice system.

Table 13

*Source: Looked After Children return (903) reporting requirement.*



### Missing and Child Exploitation

In Merton, our numbers of children leaving placements without authorisation has dropped significantly than the previous year and the number of children going missing has dropped 1% to equal the London benchmark.

There has been a lot of work with families, carers, and placements to ensure that children and young people are being reported missing appropriately, and we think this improvement in practice is responsible for the statistical increase shown below. All missing children are monitored closely through Merton’s multi-agency Missing Panel which in turn feeds into the MACE Strategic Panel. The demographic of our young people who go missing remains as are males, and aged 14-18.

Table 14

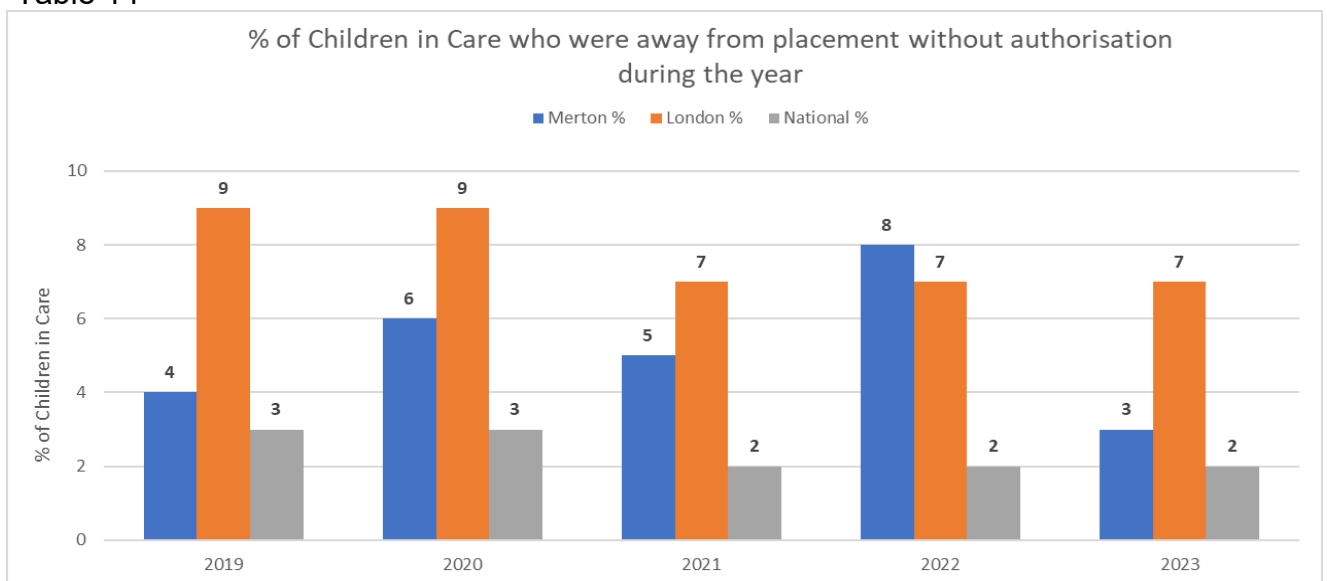
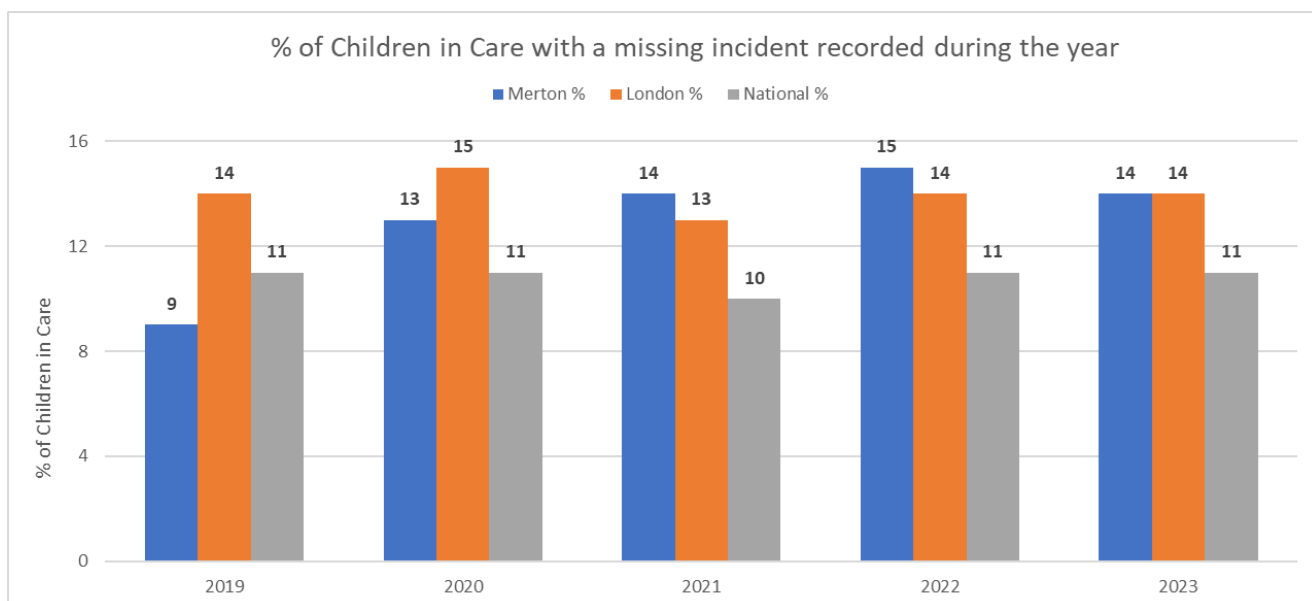


Table 15





The borough continues to develop and strengthen its awareness and understanding of the contextual harm risks within Merton. This is done by partnership working with the police, Catch 22, detached youth work and other community partnerships and agencies who remain committed to supporting children, young people and communities impacted by contextual harm.

## V. Section 6: Education

*“The work of the virtual school team is excellent. Strong strategic leadership and management oversight by the virtual school headteacher mean that outcomes for children looked after are consistently good. We continue to strive to have innovative approaches that enable children to reach their full potential start from a very young age and continue throughout their school time and beyond. Virtual schoolteachers know children well, tracking their progress and swiftly intervening when necessary. As a result, outcomes for most children improve when they enter care. Attendance at school or college for children in care is high. Support for children placed outside the local authority area is as strong as it is for those within the borough. Staff work very closely with designated teachers and school leaders. Pupil premium funding supports individual tuition where children are not making expected progress. Personal education plans are highly effective, and targets are precise and helpful for children (Ofsted Children Social Care Inspection Report 2022)”*

Merton has a dedicated virtual school who continue to work closely with colleagues in social care, providing training, support and guidance to social workers, foster carers and others, covering key issues such as: school attendance; school admissions and consideration of placement moves. Close working relationships between social care and the Virtual School ensure that Education is given priority and impacts positively on outcomes for individual children and young people. The Virtual School Advisory Teachers attend all PEPs (Personal Education Plans) to ensure that support being provided to our children is of the highest level with the completion rate of PEPs being 100%.

Some key themes across the year included:

- Children consistently making academic progress against their own targets each term.
- Merton continued to have undergraduate students during the year some of whom successful achieve bachelor of honours degree.
- No child in care was permanently excluded during 2021-2022, continuing the trend of previous years.
- At the end of the academic year 27% of Children in Care to Merton had some form of special educational need. This is in line with the National DfE Published data of 2020/2021.
- 100% of Initial and Review PEPs were all completed within timescales each term throughout the academic year.
- All school age PEPs were quality assured against robust criteria, which are rigorously applied consistently. The Virtual School continues to support those young people who are entitled to a service from the local authority, of 18 – 25 years with education and training until the age of 25.

Additionally, the Virtual School supports young people 18 – 25 years who have more challenges in becoming EET, through the work of the EET Support Worker. The Virtual School ensures that every unaccompanied asylum-seeking child registered in care to Merton receives a swift and efficient service to place in education, according to the individual's needs

The data to inform the The Virtual School Headteacher's Annual Report 2022/2023 won't be published until end of March 2024. The report will contain further details and in-depth data with respect of educational outcomes for our children in care. This will be shared at the Virtual School Steering Group and subsequently the Corporate Parenting Board in June 2024.

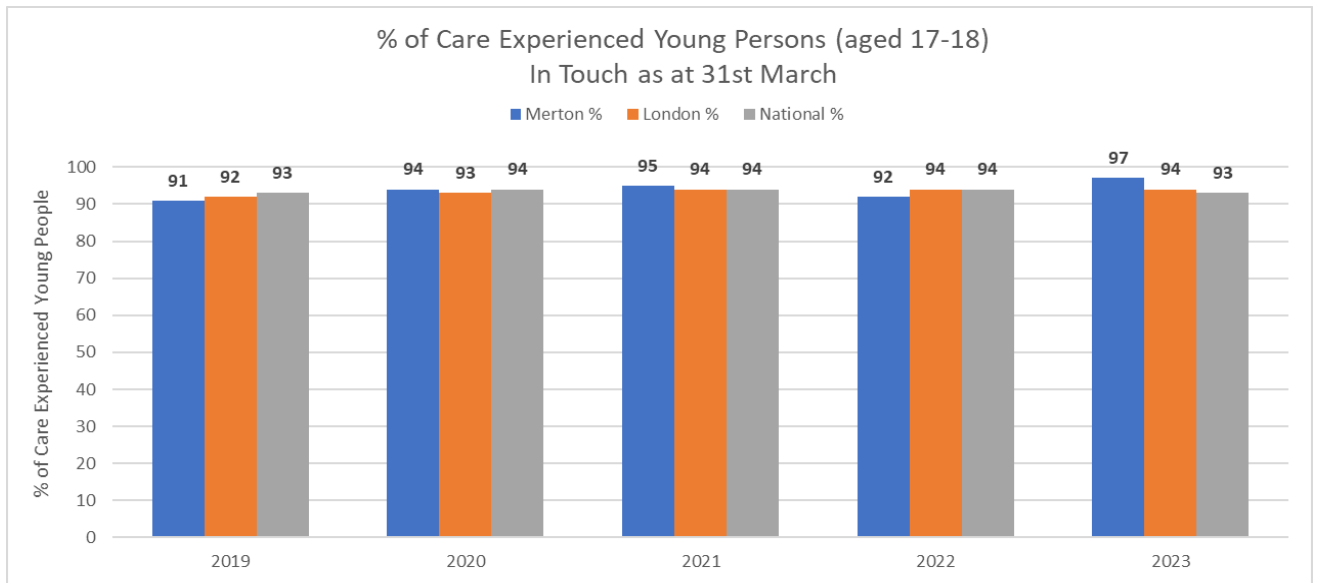
## **VI. Section 7: Care Experienced Young People aged 19-21 years**

Children's Social Care has a range of duties and powers to provide advice and assistance to eligible care experienced young people. Good corporate parents will provide young people with help and support to access education, employment and training opportunities and to find accommodation suitable to meet their needs and in Merton we aspire to be the best Corporate Parents we can be.

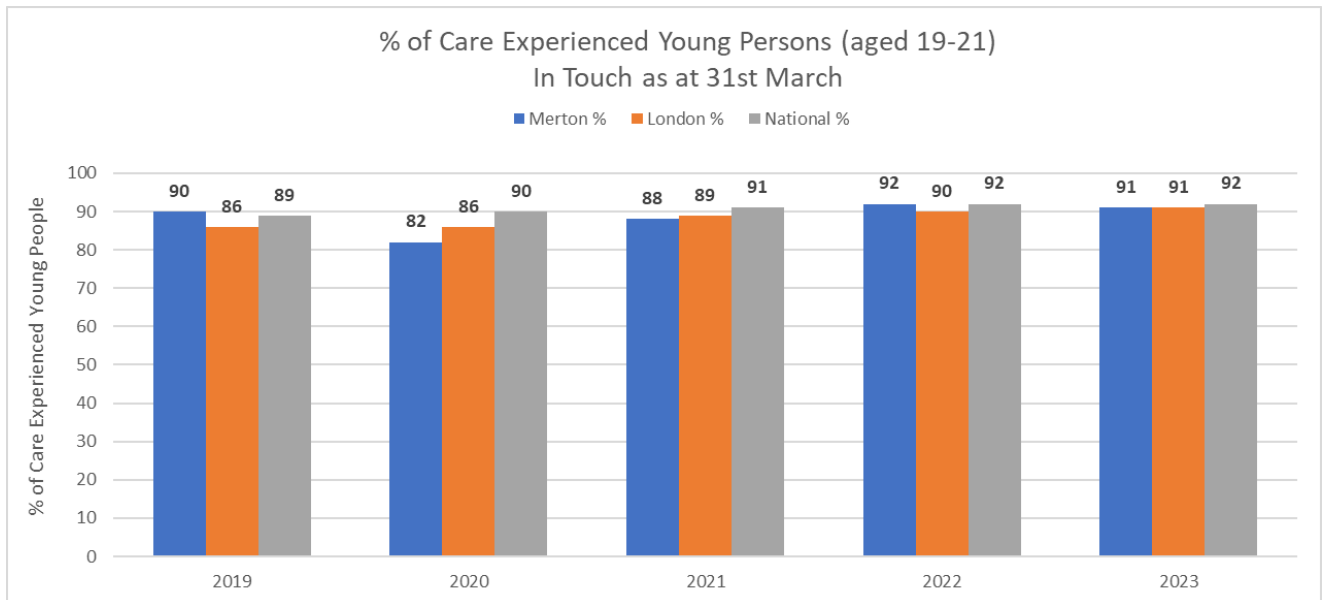
### **Care Experienced Young People in Touch**

The below graphs show Merton's performance around keeping 'in touch' with our care experienced young people. Keeping in touch is a statutory duty which ensures that local authorities are making proactive attempts to engage care leavers and ensure that they are living in suitable accommodation and progressing in education, training or employment. The graphs show continued improvement in the 17-18 cohort which saw it raise from 92% in 2022 to 97% in 2023.

Table 16



**Table 17**



**Care Experienced Young People’s Accommodation**

The legal framework for care experienced young people aims to make sure that they receive the right support and services in their transition to adulthood, including access to accommodation. The legislation most relevant to care leavers' accommodation needs is the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, which imposes accommodation duties on local authorities to support certain categories of looked-after children and care leavers.

The charts below compare Merton with our neighbours and nationally around the numbers of care experienced young people in suitable accommodation over a 5-year period.

**Table 18**

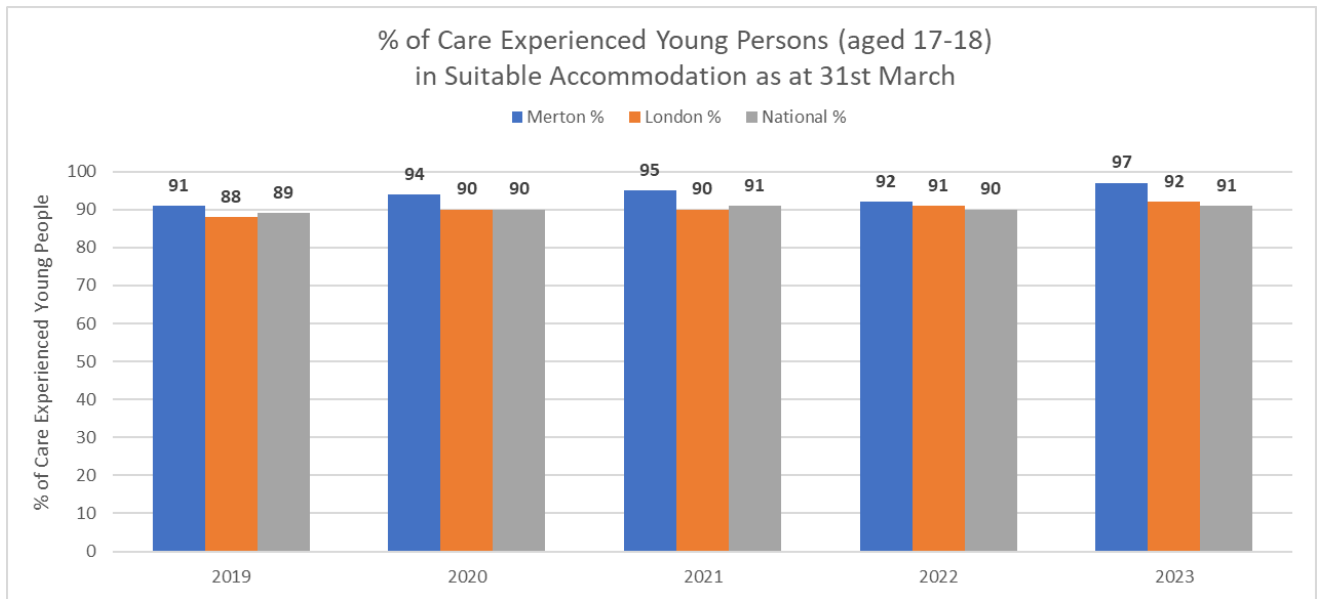
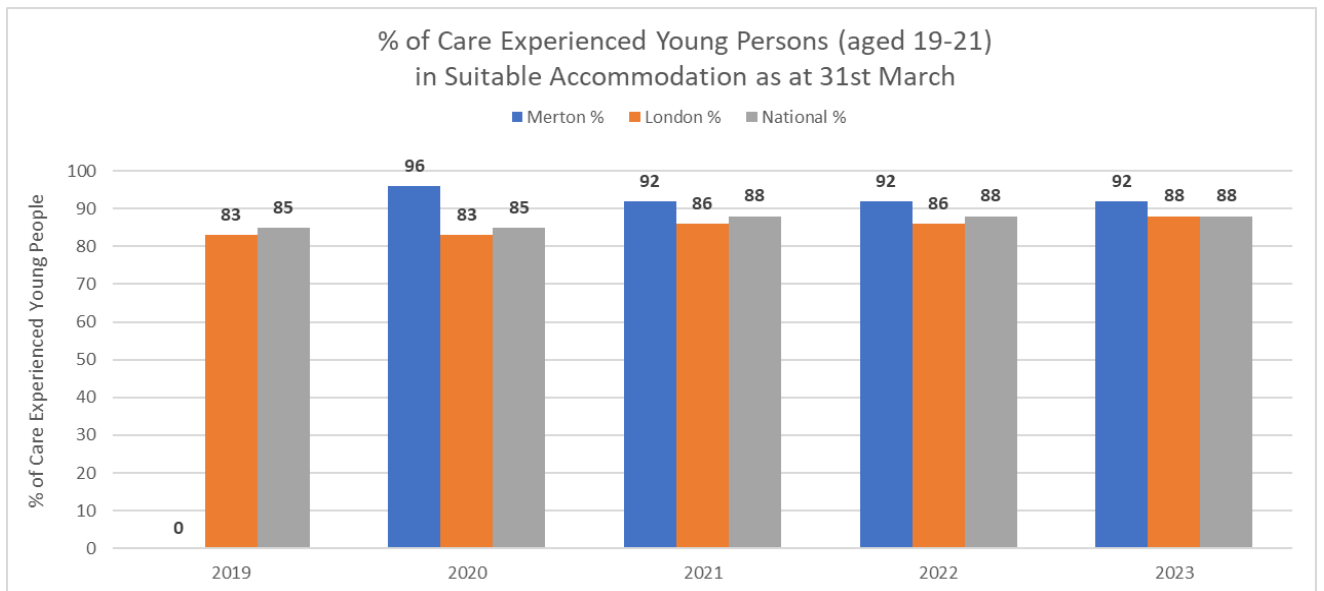
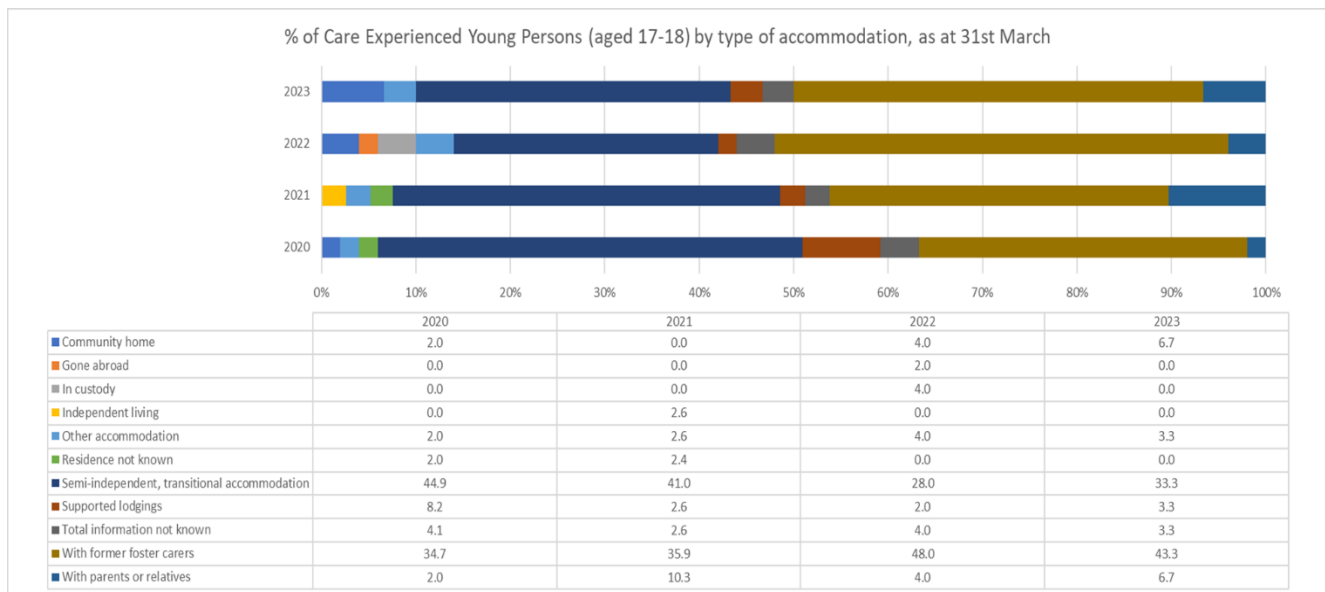


Table 19



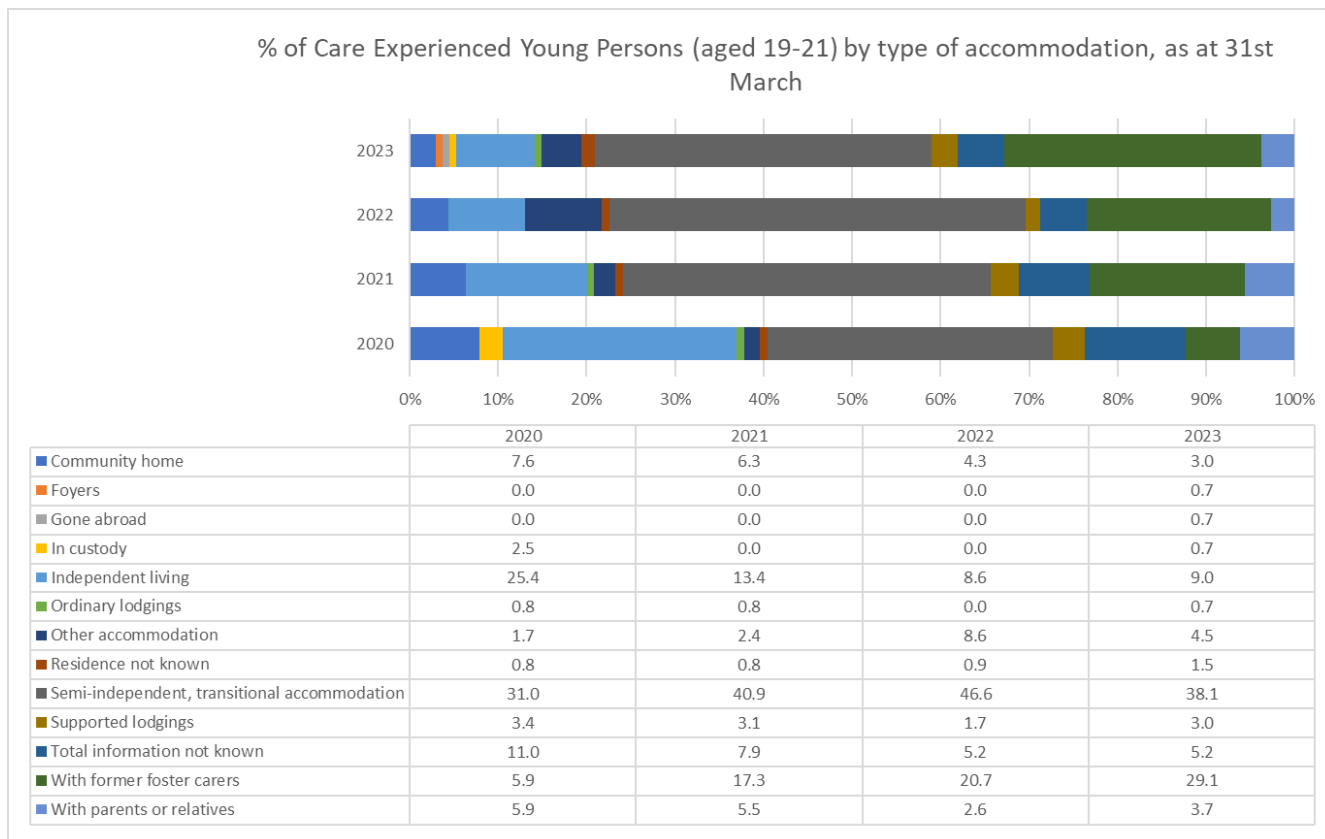
The graphs show that Merton continues to perform well comparatively with other local authorities.

Table 20



The above shows the types of accommodation our 18-year-olds are living in. It is very positive to see the high proportion of care experienced young people *staying put* with their former foster carers, which is in line with our belief that the best place to prepare for adulthood is within a loving family environment.

Table 21



The above graphs shows a continued decline in the number of young people moving onto independent accommodation. This is partly due to the pandemic and ongoing housing pressures causing the average age when young people receive their tenancies to rise. The

increasing numbers of 19 and 21-year olds remaining with their former foster carers shows the commitment the fostering community has to our children while the pressures remain in the housing sector.

### Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training (EET)

A good standard of education is a key driver towards achieving positive employment outcomes in adulthood. Positively, we have continued to improve supporting our care leavers into education, training and employment. We have dropped slightly from 82% to 80% with 17 – 18 year-olds, and have risen from 65% to 67% with 19 – 21 year-olds, being in some form of Education, Employment and Training (EET).

Table 22

Care Experienced Young Persons Activity as at 31st March (Aged 17-18)	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23	
	Merton	National	Merton	National	Merton	National	Merton	National	Merton	National
<b>Total in Education, Employment or Training</b>	79%	64%	67%	64%	69%	65%	82%	66%	80%	66%
<b>Total information not known</b>	3%	6%	6%	6%	3%	5%	4%	6%	6%	6%
<b>Total not in Education, Employment or Training</b>	18%	30%	27%	31%	28%	30%	14%	28%	16%	28%

Care Experienced Young Persons Activity as at 31st March (Aged 17-18)	2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22	
	Merton	National	Merton	National	Merton	National	Merton	National	Merton	National
<b>Total in Education, Employment or Training</b>	59%	64%	79%	64%	67%	64%	69%	65%	82%	66%
<b>Total information not known</b>	10%	6%	3%	6%	6%	6%	3%	5%	4%	6%
<b>Total not in Education, Employment or Training</b>	31%	30%	18%	30%	27%	31%	28%	30%	14%	28%

Care Experienced Young Persons Activity as at 31st March (Aged 19-21)	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23	
	Merton	National	Merton	National	Merton	National	Merton	National	Merton	National
<b>Total in Education, Employment or Training</b>	66%	52%	50%	53%	58%	52%	65%	55%	67%	56%
<b>Total information not known</b>	5%	9%	11%	9%	6%	7%	6%	7%	6%	6%
<b>Total not in Education, Employment or Training</b>	29%	39%	39%	39%	35%	41%	29%	38%	28%	38%

The below graphs show that Merton is doing well in comparison to London and National averages.

Table 23

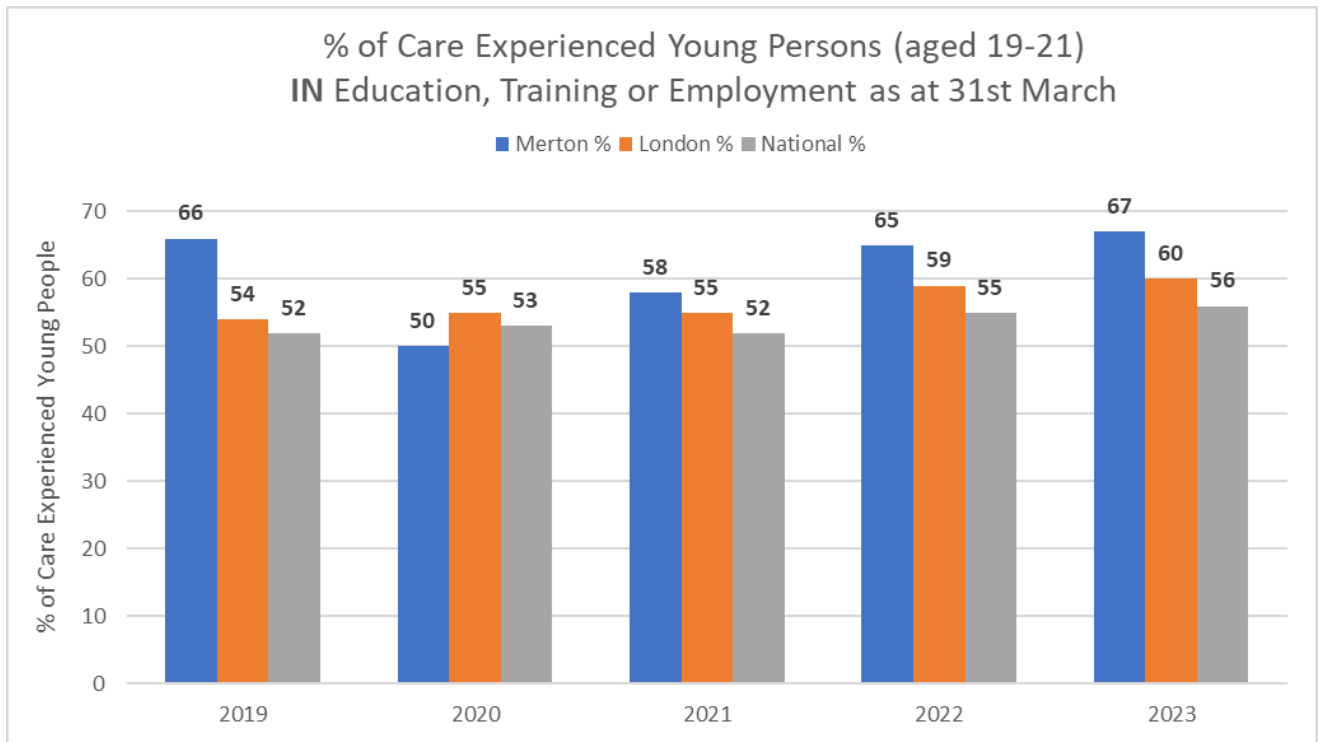
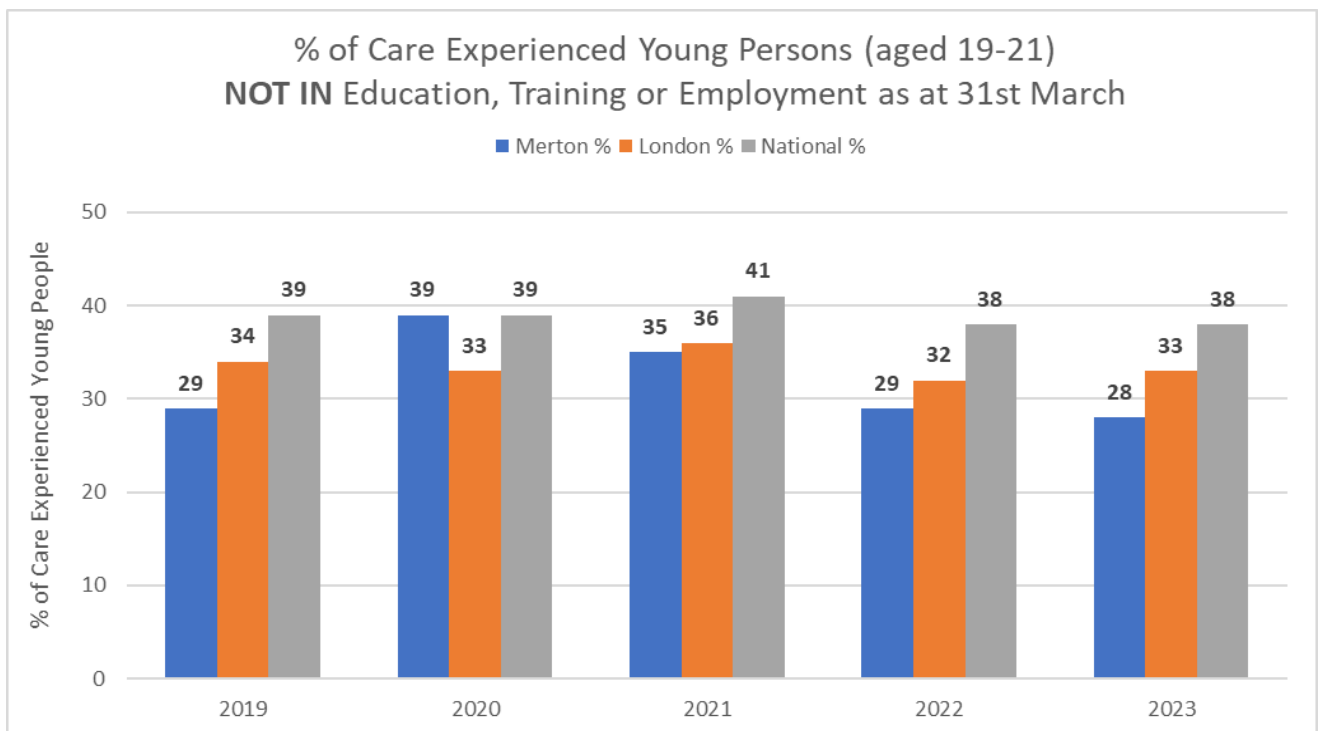


Table 24



Whilst the performance continues to remain above the London and national with care experienced young people being in education, we know that EET is an area which we must continue to strive for excellence in and have high ambitions for our young people. We continue to have monthly NEET (Not in Employment, Education and Training) panels to track and discuss our young people not in EET and what further actions we can take to support them into positive activity. We aim to build upon this panel in 2024 to have our young people attend and participate in talking about their goal and aspirations and how they can best be supported

to achieve this. The panel is chaired by one of our 16+ Team Managers and also has colleagues from the My Futures Team and the dedicated advisory teacher from our Virtual School who supports the young people finding it the most challenging to transition into or remain in EET.

### Participation and Our Voice

Merton's participation service sits within the education department where it is included in the overall youth participation of the council. Merton has several Young Inspectors two of which have been ring fenced for care experienced young people. Merton Council has a strong commitment to youth voice, and this includes hearing from our care-experienced children and young people. In Merton, the Participation and Engagement team facilitate the Children in Care Council and Care Leaver Forum, both called Our Voice.

Through Our Voice, young people can have their say, make new friends, and experience new opportunities such as social trips into Central London. Additionally, the Our Voice logo was designed by one of our care-experienced young people.



The forums allow children and young people the opportunity to have a say on the issues that are most important to them and provides professionals working with care-experienced children and young people an opportunity to consult and gain feedback. During this period, children and young people were able to have their say on a range of themes, such as:

- Creating their own campaigns around housing and moving placements
- The Government's consultation titled 'Stable Homes, Built on Love'
- Merton's Safeguarding Children's Partnership's scrutiny on adultification
- Review and feedback on the implementation on a new youth voice app
- Contribution to the Young Londoners Research Programme

The Participation team also provides opportunities for members of Our Voice to contribute to the recruitment process of new starters by sitting on interview panels and setting their own interview questions.

To ensure good engagement, the Participation team attended several team meetings and linked in with the Merton Foster Carer Association (MFCA) to update and inform those supporting children and young people about the opportunities available. Positively, the Care Leaver Forum meet once a fortnight. To boost children's participation in the Children in Care



Council, the team are in the process of creating a 12-month engagement plan, which will be co-produced with young people, and include opportunities such as training, workshops, and flexible meeting dates & times which will accommodate those who have pre-existing commitments and cannot attend the regular planned sessions. Information about Our Voice is shared directly with fostering families, Social Workers, Personal Advisors and young people already engaged with the service. The Participation team have also shared information about opportunities through their Instagram page.

Previous engagement sessions have taken place across the community, using venues such as libraries, however both forums have moved into a 'Hub' in Mitcham. The venue has been partly-decorated by young people, and they have had the opportunity to create artwork to make the space feel more welcoming. The Hub also features a new food pantry for care leavers, which is being funded through Merton Council's Children's Social Care department and the Integrated Care Board (ICB).

In addition to facilitating the forums, the Participation team have introduced two new platforms to shape the delivery of services for care-experienced children and young people. Firstly, they have begun compiling a newsletter solely for care-experienced children and young people. Young people have the opportunity to in-put to the newsletter, which is published every three months and features competitions, staff biographies and information on activities and events. Secondly, they have established an entertainments committee with the view to involve professionals, fostering families and young people when planning positive activities and events. This should also support with engagement and ensure our forums and activities are representative of Merton's wider community.

Merton are proud to share that young people's interview panels continued support recruitment to various roles in within Children, Lifelong Learning and Families (CLLF)

Our Young Inspectors were successful in a bid to facilitate peer research as part of the Young Londoners Research Programme, funded by the Mayor of London in facilitating peer research projects focused on ***“What reforms need to be made to youth services to make them more engaging and accessible for care-experienced young people, aged 11-16, in the London Boroughs of Merton, Wandsworth and Kingston?”*** and presented their key findings and recommendations at the “Voices of the Future” event in June 2023. More information with respect of the key findings of the Young Londoners Research Programme can be found in the Bright Futures: A Spotlight on Youth Services for Children in Care documents, with the full report Voices of the Future report available via the Young Londoners Research Programme website.

### *Voice of the Child in Care*

A update on the Bright Spots Survey was completed in March 2022; with the findings presented in July 2022. The focus of the survey was *Your Life Beyond Care* and the *Children in Care*. The corporate parenting have been successful in being a part of the Staying Connected pilot delivered by Coram Voice, Funded from Hadley Trust to pilot work alongside 3 other local authorised to deliver a series of workshops with Merton leadership team, workforce, carers and young people to explore national and local Bright Spots findings to

create an action plan to development and address the key issues shared within the Bright Spots Survey. The findings of the survey had continued to inform our current planning and strategies with a focus around family time and will be used to shape the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

There are many ways that the child’s voice is incorporated into their own planning including: direct work tools, their IRO consulting them prior to reviews and midway reviews, feedback on their foster homes as part of foster carer reviews, and through advocacy and independent visitors which is covered in the below section.

*Advocacy and Independent Visiting*

Jigsaw4u have been providing advocacy and independent visiting since 2013 as a commissioned service. The current contract runs until 2025. Jigsaw4u received 246 referrals for advocacy for children in their reviews in 2022/23.

The breakdown of the referrals included;

<b>Referral by Case Type</b>		
CIC	34	13%
CLA	35	13%
ICPC	159	61%
RCPC	28	10%
Complaint	2	1%
Other	6	2%
	<b>264</b>	<b>100%</b>

This was a significant increase from last year’s 60 referrals. Once a referral is made, an advocate will meet with the child and attend their review until either the young person or social worker informs them that advocacy is no longer required. This has been the Service’s busiest year by far, and (with the exception of the Covid-19 year), and the rise in referrals shows Merton's growing commitment to ensure children’s voices are heard and listened too.

This year, Jigsaw4u advocated 34 times for 18 individual UASC. These sessions generally take place via 3-way video call between the young person, advocate and an interpreter. In addition to receiving advocacy, some of these young people joined Jigsaw4u on a day trip to Brighton and have been taken to a box at Crystal Palace FC to watch live matches. An Advocate for one of the young people also got him a trial at local football club.

As of 31 March 2023, Jigsaw4u were providing 9 young people with Independent Visitors. This is in line with last year when we had 9 young people matched. The commissioned target is 8 matches.

The service supported/advocated on behalf of individuals and families (across the borough not just children in care/care experienced) in making a complaint. This was below the target of 12 with only 2 Complaints recorded for this reporting year. In Merton we see our complaints service as another way of ensuring that children and young people are being heard and to ensure that we are providing them with a good service and support young people and families around where issues they face

## **VII. Conclusion**

This reporting year remains encouraging that Merton remains focused on achieving good outcomes for our children in care, care experienced young adults and improving services and practice to support these good outcomes. The workforce continued to remain aspirational and focused in maintaining 'Outstanding' practice to maintain the awarded Ofsted judgment given during the February inspection 2022. We finished the year achieving an excellent response rate to our Coram Voice commissioned 'Bright Spots' survey and building collaboratively building an action plan to continue developing our services for our children and young people. With an organisational culture that prioritises listening, care and compassion to our services users and making continuous improvement, we will continue to adapt and seek the very best outcomes for our care experienced children and young people.

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CELEBRATING  
SUCCESS

*ACHIEVEMENT IN  
MERTON SCHOOLS  
2022 -2023*

Appendix C: School Improvement in Merton	90
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# 1. Executive Summary

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1. This report provides information about the education standards, and achievement of children and young people in Merton over the academic year 2022 - 2023. It identifies how the Local Authority (LA) has worked in partnership with schools to secure and maintain improvement.
2. The 2022/23 academic year was the second set of outcomes since the Covid 19 pandemic. There were no outcomes for KS1 and 2 in either 2020 or 2021 and KS4 and 5 were Centre Assessed Grades. Ofsted inspections had been paused with the exception of ungraded monitoring visits which meant that there was a delay in the usual inspection cycle. There would therefore have been fewer than expected changes in Ofsted outcomes. The government subsequently announced that all schools should be inspected by 2025, post Covid.
3. 97% of Merton pupils attended schools which were graded good or better. The proportion of schools judged to be good or better overall was 95%, with one school, previously graded good, being judged to be requiring improvement. This proportion is above the London and national averages. All of the Council's secondary and special schools continued to be judged to be good or better, with 44% of secondary schools judged as outstanding (well above national and London averages). Two out of the three special schools are judged as outstanding; 34% of special schools nationally are judged outstanding. Three of the Borough's 44 primary schools were not yet judged to be good or better as of August 2023. Where a school is not yet judged to be good or better, or where LA monitoring or school self-evaluation would identify there is a risk that a school would be judged as less than good the next time they are inspected, they are supported and challenged as per the LA's school improvement strategy. For more information please see page 9.
4. In 2023 attainment at all key stages and in the vast majority of indicators is above national averages. It should be noted that the DFE states that there should be no direct comparisons with either 2022 or 2019 in the secondary phase, due to the different methodologies used in calculating outcomes, with 2023 outcomes being judged in the same way as 2019 data. There are however some notable strengths in our data when compared against the Local Education Authorities in England. This included top 20 performance (out of 151 LAs across the country) in all bar one of the KS1 indicators; and in all of the reading and maths indicators at KS2. For more information please see page 5.
5. The proportion of children in Merton schools achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) in 2023 is 1.9 percentage points above the national average. There has however been a significant dip in national, London and Merton proportions of pupils achieving the GLD in 2022/23. The lower performance in national, London and Merton percentages of pupils at GLD after the pandemic reflects the unique circumstances this cohort of pupils experienced during lockdown, as well as the changes in how their achievement was assessed and reported. This cohort were particularly disrupted by lockdowns between the ages of 1 and 3. For more information please see page 17.

6. 83% of pupils reached the expected standard for phonics decoding in Merton, an increase of three percentage points on 2022, and ranking the Local Authority 11<sup>th</sup> nationally. For more information please see page 22.
7. At Key Stage 1 (KS1), in reading and in maths performance remained above national averages at both the expected standard and greater depth. Performance in writing is above national averages but is an area of development. It is pleasing that performance in all three subjects at the Greater Depth standard ranks Merton highly in comparison with all other LAs. For more information please see 25.
8. At Key Stage 2 (KS2), the progress and attainment scores in reading and mathematics are all above the national averages. At the higher levels, maths is 12 percentage points above the national average, and in reading eight percentage points higher. Writing attainment is above national averages, but shows relative underperformance in comparison with reading and writing. For more information please see page 29.
9. Performance in Merton secondary schools at KS4 remains strong. At 0.58, the Progress 8 score in Merton is well above national, and ranks the Borough 2nd in the country. This strong performance has been maintained for many years. In the Attainment 8 indicator, Merton's average (52.1) is above the national and the London averages. The proportion of pupils achieving grades 9-4 in the EBacc subjects, including English and maths is above the local as well as 7% above the national average, which is an increase of 3% on 2022. This is one indication of the breadth of curriculum being offered in Merton schools at KS4. For more information please see page 42.
10. For KS5 qualifications the Average Point Score (APS) per entry is above the national averages for all qualification types. Merton remains above London averages for Tech Level and Applied General qualifications. Outcomes for A level and Academic qualifications are above national but slightly below London. Merton's average point score per entry (best three) is above national and London, although there is work to achieve the highest grade. For more information please see 47.
11. The proportions of young people who are Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET) and whose status is not known, have again fallen and are significantly better than national and London averages. Performance in all three indicators continues to place Merton in the top quintile of performance nationally. Merton has continued to have the 5<sup>th</sup> best performance in England for the second year running. This has been achieved as a result of significant and robust tracking and partnership working across schools, colleges and CSF teams. For more information please see page 50.
12. This year the proportion of 16 – 17-year-olds participating in education and training has decreased slightly 0.3 percentage points, this is in line with London and national falls. The percentage staying on in education remains very strong, but the open job market has means that more young people are going straight into work without training, and which doesn't count as meeting the participation duty. Merton's performance is in the first quintile (best performance) in comparison with other Local Authorities in England. For more information please see page 51.
13. School Attendance post pandemic is a significant concern. Nationally and internationally levels of attendance are two percentage points below pre pandemic level, and Persistent Absence (attendance below 90%) has doubled. Merton's attendance picture in 2022/23 overall is a good one, with better



attendance in Merton than nationally, and in London and Outer London. However, looking underneath this headline figure, it is evident that school attendance is declining for specific groups such as those eligible for free school meals, or with Education Health and Care Plans, and lower for boys, and Black African and Mixed white/black Caribbean children. In 2022/3 the DFE issued new proposed guidelines for managing school attendance and significant work was undertaken to begin this work in 2022/23. For more information please see page 70.

14. Merton had no primary or special school permanent exclusions in 2022-2023. This has been true for several years. This was achieved through ongoing significant and complex inclusion work carried out by primary schools and the LA's Virtual Behaviour Service (VBS). The number of permanent exclusions in secondary schools increased significantly in the autumn term of 2022/23, but then reduced in the spring and summer terms. This was due to a rise in contextual risk and serious youth violence in the borough which reduced significantly following December 2022. Secondary headteachers met and discussed the data and took action to prevent exclusions where possible and appropriate. The number of suspensions in primary and secondary schools in Merton is well below national comparators. The figures for suspensions in Special Schools are based on small cohorts, with individual exclusions therefore being represented as a high percentage. Nevertheless, the continuing high level is concerning and is a focus again 2023/24. For more information please see page 76.
15. The number of children who are electively home educated has remained significantly higher post pandemic, with proportionate rises seen in safeguarding cases in this cohort. There has been an improvement in the number of children seen in home visits or online education reviews. The overall rise in numbers has been driven by closure of private schools, mental health issues in young people and educational philosophy choice by parents with more resources available post pandemic. The rise is steeper in primary, but our highest volume year is Year 10. This rise in cases is a resource challenge for the local authority an apprentice post has been added to support administration in year. For more information please see page 81.

# Summary of Performance Information for all Key Stages

EYFS	Compared to Merton 2022	Compared to National 2023	2023 Outer London neighbours (quartile)	2023 Statistical neighbours (quartile)	2022 National Standing	2023 National Standing
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Good Level of Development	+0.1	1.9↑			24 <sup>th</sup>	40 <sup>th</sup>
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## KS1

Year 1 phonics	+3	3↑			16 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>
Expected Standard Reading	=	3↑			19 <sup>th</sup>	21 <sup>st</sup>
Expected Standard Writing	+2	2↑			38 <sup>th</sup>	42 <sup>nd</sup>
Expected Standard Mathematics	+3	5↑			18 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>
Greater Depth Reading	+2	6↑			16 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>
Greater Depth Writing	-1	3↑			16 <sup>th</sup>	18 <sup>th</sup>
Higher Standard Mathematics	=	6↑			7 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>

## KS2

Expected Standard Reading	-1	6↑			16 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>
Expected Standard Writing (TA)	+3	2↑			70 <sup>th</sup>	57 <sup>th</sup>
Expected Standard Mathematics	+1	7↑			13 <sup>th</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>
Expected Standard Reading/Writing/Maths	+2	5↑			32 <sup>nd</sup>	28 <sup>th</sup>
High Score Reading	+4	8↑			22 <sup>nd</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>
Greater Depth Standard Writing (TA)	-2	3↑			16 <sup>th</sup>	35 <sup>th</sup>
High Score Mathematics	+3	12↑			7 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>
Higher Standard Reading/Writing/Maths	=	1↑			5 <sup>th</sup>	25 <sup>th</sup>
Progress Score Reading	+0.27	0.96↑			34 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>
Progress Score Writing	-0.32	=			60 <sup>th</sup>	86 <sup>th</sup>
Progress Score Mathematics	+0.17	1.66↑			13 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup>

## KS4

Attainment 8 Score	-1.4	7.5↑			19 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup>
Progress 8 Score	+0.01	0.65↑			2 <sup>nd</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>
Grades 9-4 in English and maths	-2.1	13.2↑			21 <sup>st</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>
English Baccalaureate	-1.8	14↑			20 <sup>th</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>

## KS5

Average points per entry (A level)	-3.72	1.41↓			61 <sup>st</sup>	57 <sup>th</sup>
Average points per entry (Applied General)	-3.36	0.83↑			32 <sup>nd</sup>	25 <sup>th</sup>

## Exclusions

Permanent Exclusions – primary*	=	0.02↓			1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>
Permanent Exclusions – secondary*	+0.13	0.03↓			39 <sup>th</sup>	19 <sup>th</sup>
Permanent Exclusions – special*	=	0.06↓			1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>
Fixed Term Exclusions – primary*	+0.49	0.25↓			21 <sup>st</sup>	19 <sup>th</sup>
Fixed Term Exclusions – secondary*	+1.13	8.52↓			6 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>
Fixed Term Exclusions – special*	-4.98	10.2↑			107 <sup>th</sup>	141 <sup>st</sup>

## Attendance

Absence - primary	+2.5	0.3↓			25 <sup>th</sup>	36 <sup>th</sup>
Absence – secondary	+2.2	1.3↓			4 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>
Persistent Absence - primary	+8.9	=			20 <sup>th</sup>	71 <sup>st</sup>
Persistent Absence – secondary	+8.9	4.0↓			7 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>

Arrows/plus or minus signs indicate performance relative to performance in 2022 (the 'Compared to 2022' column); or in comparison with national performance (in the 'Compared to National 2023' column).

Exclusions and attendance data in this table are for 2022, (the latest published data for rankings available). More up to date data is available in Chapter 5.

Please note that in the majority of cases upward arrows are positive, but in the case of exclusions and persistent absence relative to 2022 or national data, downward arrows indicate positive performance.

The DFE urges caution in comparing 2022 secondary phase outcomes with 2023 by saying, 'Performance measures based on qualification results from 2022/23 cannot be directly compared to measures from 2021/22. This is because a different grading approach was used in 2021/22, to take account of the impact of the pandemic. In 2022/23 there was a return to pre-pandemic standards for GCSEs, AS and A levels, with protection built into the grading process to recognise the disruption that students have faced.'

### Quartile Ranking

	First quartile
	Second quartile
	Third quartile
	Fourth quartile

- This data identifies how performance at all key stages and in most indicators continues to be above national averages.
- Whilst data indicates some declines, Merton school are still performing well in comparison with national outcomes, particularly in the higher levels of reading and mathematics in KS1 where we are 4<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> in the country respectively. At KS4 we are ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the country for Progress 8 – representing consistently high performance in this indicator since it was introduced.
- Areas of concern are linked to writing at KS2, and fixed term exclusions in special schools. These areas in particular are identified as areas for improvement for 23/24
- Attendance is an area of national concern and this is reflected in Merton's data, although performance is better than nationally and there have been improvements this year (see chapter 5 for more, and more current, detail).

## Summary of Priorities for 2023/24

### School Improvement

- a) Continue to ensure all schools are judged to be at least good when inspected by Ofsted, through the effective use of the Merton School Improvement Strategy, including Support and Challenge groups.
- b) Aspire to securing outstanding for outcomes within a graded inspection for all schools currently judged to be outstanding and for currently good schools.
- c) Ensure that schools which have a deficit budget, or are at risk of having one, are supported and challenged to plan to bring their budgets at least into balance.
- d) Continue to support and challenge schools to ensure strong leadership of SEN and staff confidence in the resources within the school and local authority to meet the needs of more SEND pupils in a mainstream setting.
- e) Improve outcomes for disadvantaged groups, including the global majority, and empower schools to effectively meet the needs of all their pupils through guidance, training, advice and in school support.
- f) Promote strategic links between schools and council groups focused on aspects of equalities including Council Equalities group, Black Lives Matter and Equalities Forum, REN, EDI and schools, LBOC 2027, City of Sanctuary and Schools of Sanctuary, London Borough of Sports, and EDI.
- g) Ensure that safeguarding vigilance is a strength of our schools and that they work effectively with the Hub and Early Help.

### Early Years

- a) Based on projected admissions figures, support schools to develop appropriate models of provision where needed
- b) Support schools to develop their EYFS arrangements in the context of the Government's national expansion of Early Years provision.
- c) Ensure a continued focus on the achievement of Global Majority groups, so that gaps narrow, if not close, with their white peers.
- d) Narrow the achievement gap for pupils eligible for Free School Meals.
- e) To ensure the best provision is in place for children with SEND in mainstream and additionally resourced provision.

### Primary Phase

- a) Continue to support schools to improve outcomes in writing, particularly for pupils with SEND, and ensure that expectations of writing standards are as high within the wider curriculum, as in English lessons.
- b) Provide support for schools in establishing benchmarks in order to track attainment in writing in yr 2 & 4, given that year 2 SATs have been removed.
- c) Continued work on oracy, improving pupils' skills in using talk to learn across the curriculum (EYFS- KS2). Developing further materials to support oracy practice for EYFS, KS3 and for pupils with SEND.
- d) Explore strategies to promote reading fluency at KS3 and within specialist provisions.
- e) Improve experiences and outcomes for pupils with SEND by embedding 'Ordinarily Available Guidance' and ensuring pupils have consistency of access to the curriculum

- f) Continue to support schools to continue to embed a mastery approach to the teaching of mathematics which is inclusive of SEND pupils
- g) Improve attainment in maths of all pupils so that Merton's attainment at EXS+ is in-line or greater than in 2022.

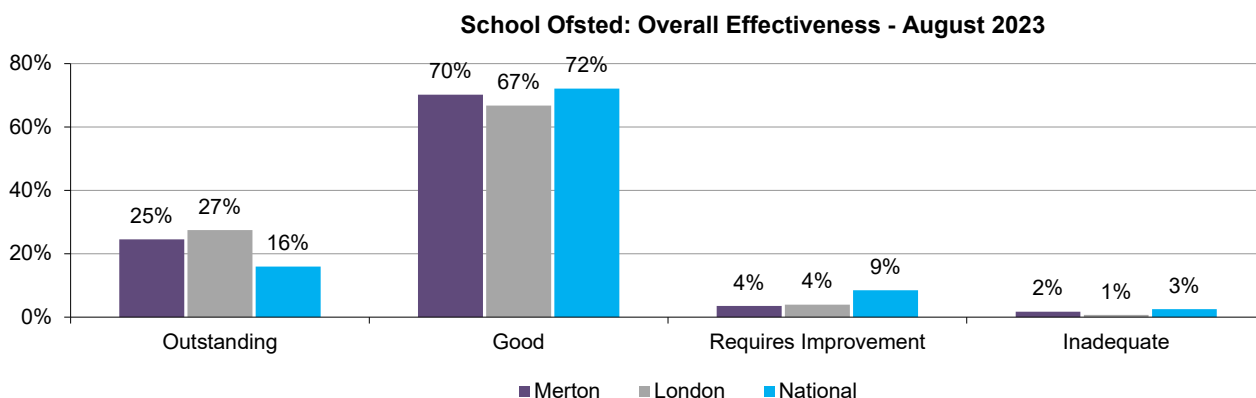
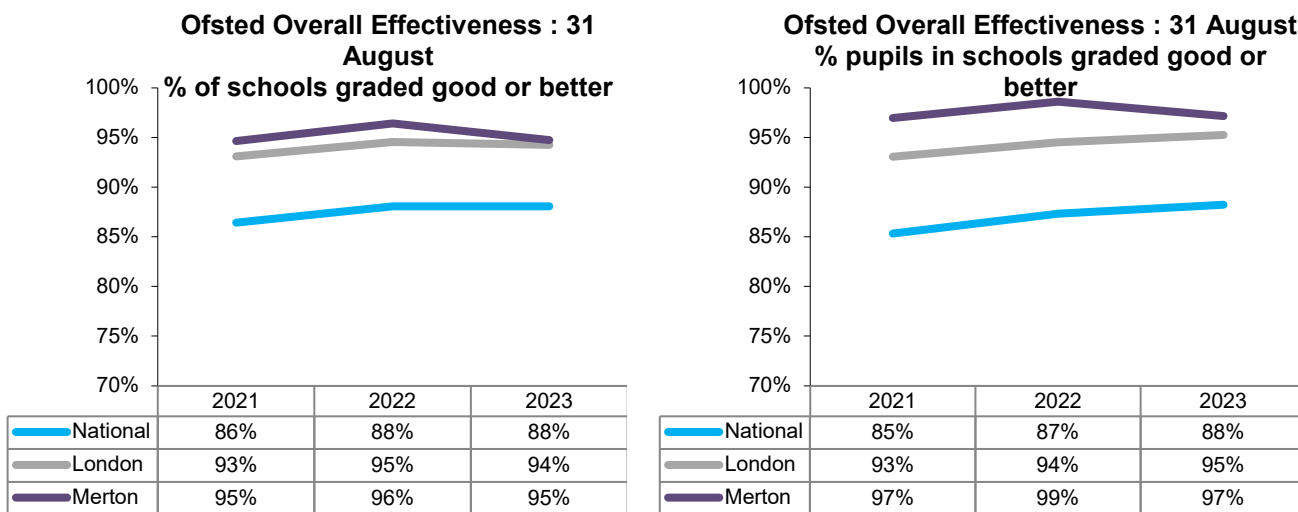
### **Secondary Phase**

- a) Ensure all Merton secondary schools remain good or outstanding.
- b) Sustain the focus on improving outcomes for the most able pupils in school sixth forms, so that the proportions achieving higher A level outcomes improve.
- c) Ensure that schools continue to develop a broad and inclusive curriculum, which meets the needs of all pupils, particularly pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils.
- d) To work closely with providers, in order to develop the breadth of quality assured vocational KS4 alternative provision, and ensure all pupils have a greater awareness of apprenticeship and technical education post-16 pathways.
- e) To develop the breadth of quality assured on-site KS4 alternative provision.
- f) To support schools in enabling students have a greater awareness of apprenticeship and technical education post-16 pathways.
- g) To set up a process to establish a supported internship model in the council to expands the offer to more young people with SEND.

### **Inclusion**

- a) Review the LA's section 19 responsibilities in line with the national report from the Ombudsman and act accordingly
- b) Implement the action plan from Merton's multi agency attendance self-assessment to improve rates of attendance in Merton
- c) Develop an Alternative Provision steering group to monitor the quality of AP provision
- d) Safely manage the volume increase in EHE and review resources accordingly.
- e) Develop a project group of schools to work on a greater understanding of trauma and attachment to inform approaches to social and emotional and mental health needs in schools.

## 2. Ofsted Outcomes and School Improvement



- 2.1 A new more rigorous inspection framework was introduced in the 2021- 22 academic year and schools who had previously been exempt from inspection, due to an outstanding judgement, came back into the inspection schedule in 2020. By November 2022 Ofsted noted that ‘over 80% of these schools that had a graded inspection last year did not retain the outstanding grade. The majority were judged to be good. However, around a fifth were rated requires improvement (17%) or inadequate (4%).’ It is within this more challenging framework that our schools were judged in the 2022/23 academic year.
- 2.2 97% of pupils attended a school judged good or better in the academic year 2022-23 which is above London and national averages.
- 2.3 The proportion of schools judged to be good or better in Merton remained broadly as 2022, at 95%. There was a slight variance as a result of one school, previously good, being judged to require improvement in its latest inspection. This school is receiving additional support from both the LA and another local primary school. Merton remains above London and significantly above national figures.

- 2.4 All of the Council’s secondary and special schools continued to be judged to be good or better, with 44% of secondary schools judged as outstanding (well above national and London averages). Two out of the three special schools were judged as outstanding; 34% of special schools nationally are judged outstanding.
- 2.5 Three of Merton’s schools were not yet judged to be good or better as of August 2023, with all three being in the primary phase. This means that 93% of primary schools were judged to be good or better at that point, which is above the national average of 88% for this educational phase. Where a school is not yet judged to be good or better, or where LA monitoring or school self-evaluation would identify there is a risk that a school would be judged as less than good the next time they are inspected, they are supported and challenged as per the LA’s school improvement strategy (please see Appendix C for details).
- 2.6 During 2022/2023, 19 LA maintained schools and academies in Merton were inspected. This compares with 10 in the previous year and represents one third of all Merton maintained schools. The rise reflects the ‘catch up’ being undertaken by Ofsted after the pandemic, and their aim to ensure all schools are inspected by summer 2025. All except one (noted above) were judged to be at least good.
- 2.7 Harris Merton, Wimbledon Park, Harris Wimbledon and Cricket Green were all judged to be outstanding.
- 2.8 Hillcross and St Mark’s Academy both retained their ‘good’ judgements in ungraded inspections, but were identified as being potentially better than good, and so will receive a full, graded inspection within one to two years to check out this hypothesis.
- 2.9 The following schools were judged to be good:
- The Priory
  - Dundonald
  - Gorringe Park
  - SS Peter and Paul
  - Abbotsbury
  - Wimbledon College
  - St Matthew's Primary School
  - Sacred Heart RC Primary School
  - St John Fisher RC Primary School
  - St Thomas of Canterbury RC School
  - Liberty Primary School
  - The Sherwood School

## 2022/23 School Improvement priorities, key actions taken and impact

2.10

**Priority:**

Continue to ensure all schools are judged to be at least good when inspected by Ofsted, through the effective use of the Merton School Improvement Strategy, including Support and Challenge groups.

**Action taken to secure improvement:**

All maintained schools and three academies were supported during the year through the Merton School Improvement Strategy (details of which can be found in Appendix C).

Support and Challenge Groups were put in place for all LA maintained schools judged by Ofsted in their last inspection to require improvement, and for good or outstanding schools where the Local Authority identified that there was a risk that they would be judged less than good when next inspected. These schools received significant and tailored support from members of Merton School Improvement and officers from other teams and services.

**Impact:**

97% of Merton pupils attend a school with a good or better outcome. This is above London and national figures. This represents 95% of our schools achieving a good or better outcome.

2.11

**Priority:**

Aspire to securing outstanding for outcomes within a graded inspection for all schools currently judged to be outstanding and for currently good schools.

**Action taken to secure improvement:**

- Continued support through MEP programme, included where appropriate targeted school reviews.
- Promotion of the Attain Partnership Peer to Peer programme – including 6 schools.
- Programme led by Ofsted Inspector targeting primary schools wishing to retain or secure outstanding Ofsted judgement.

**Impact:**

- Two schools with 'good' judgements were judged by Ofsted to be potentially outstanding. Three schools retained their outstanding judgements, and Harris Wimbledon was deemed outstanding its first inspection since opening. Liberty achieved outstanding judgements with regards to its Early Years provision and Personal Development.
- Those schools attending the 'Retaining and Securing an Outstanding judgement' course were able to clarify their understanding of what constitutes 'outstanding'; middle leaders in particular were supported to understand what 'outstanding' means for their areas of the curriculum.



2.12

**Priority:**

Continue to support school senior and middle leaders to prepare for inspection under the current Ofsted Framework for Inspection.

**Action taken to secure improvement:**

- The suite of National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) for leaders and emerging leaders were signposted through subject network meetings, ECT training and through the weekly email to all schools
- 21 Merton school leaders and council staff facilitated the ECT training programme ensuring that there is a strong promotion of NPQ courses in the second year of the induction programme
- Opportunities for cross school collaboration have ensured that headteachers are now accessing the NPQEL (National Professional Qualification for Executive Leadership), with both Executive Heads of our most recent federations currently completing the training.
- Two members of the Merton School Improvement team delivered NPQ courses.
- Preparation for Ofsted is threaded throughout the current SWLSEP Senior Leadership Programme. 35 participants from across Merton, Sutton, Wandsworth, Richmond, Croydon and Kingston are currently attending the programme.
- Continued promotion of subject leader support package with subject leaders and senior leaders
- Individual schools supported in their preparation through reviews with MSI colleagues (modelled deep dive activities)
- 'Deep dive' documents prepared to support subject leaders in their preparation for Ofsted interviews/ lesson visits
- Written and distributed guidance document, 'Preparing for an OFSTED Inspection for Mathematics Subject Leaders' – written with input from SLs' experiences of their own inspections
- Detailed look at how to conduct 'deep dives' as a SL
- 'Deep dives' conducted with SLs within their own schools during school reviews – modelled activities

**Impact:**

- Improved opportunities for professional development and career enhancement
- Collaborative cross-school leadership enhanced (Hatfeild / Jospeh Hood and SS Peter and Paul / St Teresa's)
- Improved confidence amongst senior leaders
- Stability of senior leadership in supporting vulnerable schools

2.13

**Priority:**

Involve schools, alongside local communities, in marking the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Windrush and the themes that this significant milestone highlights, for example:

- identifying inequalities in academic outcomes and raising pupils' academic achievement;
- celebrating diversity and inclusion through an inclusive curriculum;
- being ambitious for a cultural capital to enrich life and educational aspiration for all and particularly Black and ethnic minority pupils.

**Action taken to secure improvement:**

- Supported schools' celebration and acknowledgement of key equalities national and local events.
- Windrush 75th Anniversary 22.06.2023 - Merton school students were invited to research and submit work on "The Meaning of Windrush," to highlight their thoughts, hopes and dreams for the future. Entries were artwork, poetry and posters. Selected entries featured in a 2-week exhibition at Merton Civic Centre.

Successful entrants were invited to a special launch (29 June) Prizes were awarded for the entries chosen by a local panel and The Mayor.

- Created book lists for schools highlighting books that include characters and/ or families with diverse ethnicities and cultures.
- Support for individual schools in ensuring that their curriculum is representative of their communities: in history/ geography topics, in musicians and artists studied, in text choices in English etc.
- Delivered CPD – ‘Leading the Way: Driving a Whole School Approach to Promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion’, in readiness for OFSTED.
- Distributed DfE Equality Act 2010 advice booklet to assist school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local governments with Equality Duty.
- Updated safeguarding advice regarding additional duties for schools to protect pupils who are or who are perceived as LGBTQ+, this includes against bullying and harassment.
- Monitored action plans which address Equality issues. Supporting schools with writing EDI objectives.
- Identified good practice in Merton schools and create opportunities for sharing this expertise through EDI Networks.

**Impact:**

- Very good attendance at Windrush celebration event. Positive feedback from parents/students and schools to Heritage Team/School Improvement about Windrush Event.
- Schools reporting increased confidence in adapting the curriculum, particularly in history, to give increased representation.
- Positive evaluations from Merton Race Equality in Education Conference - ‘A Time to Act’

2.14

**Priority:**

Support and challenge schools to ensure strong leadership of SEN and staff confidence in the resources within the school and local authority SENDIS and LBL teams to meet the needs of more SEND pupils in a mainstream setting.

**Action taken to secure improvement has included:**

- Nine primary schools and three secondary schools were supported through the new Merton ‘Inclusion Project’. The project, facilitated by officers in the Merton School Improvement service and seconded staff from schools, aimed to support mainstream schools to:
  - adopt inclusive practice;
  - develop a graduated response; and
  - strengthen the SEN Support offer available

The work in each school was tailored to their individual priorities.

- Inclusion profiles were started to be developed for all schools.
- ‘Ordinarily Available Guidance’ was drafted with school leaders and professionals across the local SEND partnership, to strengthen understanding of what mainstream schools should provide to all pupils.
- The SENCO forums for schools and also for early years settings, continued to be well attended and provided strong forums for the sharing of best practice, and for problem solving.
- Joint SENCO forum and mathematics subject leaders’ meeting, where the SENCO and SL worked together on aspects of SEN provision within the subject, to ensure there is a consistent approach to advice provided by both the SL and SENCO within the school. Delivered jointly with the SEND adviser (VP)
- Regular session within the SL meetings on provision for pupils with SEND, focussing on different aspects of classroom practice
- A greater request from schools for staff training on adaptation for pupils with SEND. This has been tailored for individual schools’ needs and their approach to teaching the mathematics curriculum

**Impact:**

- Impact has been measurable in all schools taking part in the Inclusion Project, linked to the priorities identified in each.

- Growing confidence of subject leaders and teachers in adapting learning for SEND within a mastery context
- KS2 attainment for pupils on SEN Support is above the national average and in-line with Merton's pre-pandemic attainment (2019)
- Progress for pupils on SEN Support is positive at 0.26 and above 2022 and 2019 (pre-pandemic)

2.15

**Priority:**

Ensure ATTAIN continues to provide strong local collaborative leadership, addressing local priorities effectively and continue to work in partnership with Teaching Hubs, Wandle, MSTA and Merton school leaders.

**Action taken to secure improvement:**

The **ATTAIN partnership** has commissioned and funded the following initiatives:

- An enhanced induction package for new/recently appointed headteachers including the following:
  - Wellbeing support from HeadsUp4HTs
  - Coaching support – both 1:1 and group
  - Mentoring support
  - Health and Safety training
  - Professional development session: 'Developing your Vision', 'Effective Monitoring and School Evaluation', 'Effective Monitoring of the School Budget', and 'Developing SEND Practice'
- Primary peer reviews
- Developing Reading for Fluency in KS3
- Race Equality conference
- Facilitation of the PSHE network
- Enhancing Teacher Assistant programme (led by the Merton Special Training Alliance)
- A pilot peer support session for primary schools to discuss budgets

**Teach Wimbledon** continued its strong partnership work. Comprising 16 schools across Merton (six secondary schools and 10 primary schools), Teach Wimbledon works alongside the University of Roehampton and Merton to deliver routes into teaching through the offer of a high-quality training programme delivered at the University, in host schools and through a complementary training programme delivered by the Merton School Improvement Team.

Through Coventry and Roehampton Universities, 13 people began their **Level 6 teaching apprenticeships**.

The **Merton Special Training Association (MSTA)** continued to work to deliver support for school effectiveness and specialist best practice, including School to School support, Continuing Professional and Leadership Development, and Initial Teacher Training.

- Roehampton University deliver **subject leader seminars for foundation subjects** including RE, Art & Design, IT, Science, Design and Technology. Sessions delivered between February-May 2022 were well attended, with over 30 schools in attendance.
- **School Business Managers working group with a focus on mentoring**, training and succession planning, apprenticeships Financial Support Benchmarking
- **Herts for Learning Reading Fluency Project** involving central training by the Herts for Learning consultants, 3 Merton specialists delivering the mid-project training and carrying out early support visits.
- **NQT +1 programmes** for those whose induction and early teaching experience had been severely disrupted by the pandemic. Training was delivered by our training partners **MSTA** (Primary) and Teach Wimbledon (Secondary). Ofsted have also stressed the importance in prioritising the professional development of this group of teachers who have been impacted by the pandemic and also are not able to access the ECF programme.

The school improvement team continued its close working relationship with the Wandle Teaching Hub. Staff from both Merton schools and the school improvement team support in delivering work on behalf of the Maths Hub, English Hub and locally facilitated ECT programme.

Access to a wider range of NPQ courses, delivered through the Wandle Teaching Hub has enhanced the offer and career progression of many teacher in Merton.

**Impact:**

Teach Wimbledon provided a strong local network of support ensuring all trainees are successful in finding teaching places at the end of the programme, with the vast majority securing places in Merton schools.

The ECT programme, supported through the Wandle Teaching Hub, has ensured continuity of delivery for new teachers entering the profession. The new National Professional Qualification programme, supported through the Wandle Teaching Hub, has ensured a nationally recognised suite of courses to support leadership opportunities with Merton schools.

2.16

**Priority:** Ensure that safeguarding vigilance is a strength of our schools and that they work effectively with the Hub and Early Help

**Action taken to secure improvement has included:**

Schools were supported by Merton's dedicated 'Safeguarding in Schools Officer' throughout the year. All schools received:

- a model safeguarding policy reflecting updates the key document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- training to be used with all school staff at the beginning of the academic year;
- new Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) training
- regular (at least termly) forums for all DSLs

In addition, targeted schools, for example, those expecting an Ofsted inspection, benefited from safeguarding reviews.

The Head of School Improvement and the Safeguarding in Schools officer also supported schools with particular safeguarding incidents, including facilitating work with our Children and Families Hub, as well as teams across Children's Social Care.

Support for safeguarding in secondary schools was provided by the Social Workers in Schools team, and for schools across both phases through the DSL Supervision Project. Merton's Early Help coordinators supported schools with 'Team Around the Family' meetings, and ensuring strong connection with the wider Early Help system.

**Impact:**

- Safeguarding was deemed effective in all Ofsted inspections across the year.
- Where safeguarding concerns were raised, schools were supported to address these effectively.
- Schools reported feeling supported in their work with families through the range of projects identified above.

**School Improvement Priorities for 2023/24**

- a) Continue to ensure all schools are judged to be at least good when inspected by Ofsted, through the effective use of the Merton School Improvement Strategy, including Support and Challenge groups.

- b) Aspire to securing outstanding for outcomes within a graded inspection for all schools currently judged to be outstanding and for currently good schools.
- c) Ensure that schools which have a deficit budget, or are at risk of having one, are supported and challenged to plan to bring their budgets at least into balance.
- d) Continue to support and challenge schools to ensure strong leadership of SEN and staff confidence in the resources within the school and local authority to meet the needs of more SEND pupils in a mainstream setting.
- e) Improve outcomes for disadvantaged groups, including the global majority, and empower schools to effectively meet the needs of all their pupils through guidance, training, advice and in school support.
- f) Promote strategic links between schools and council groups focused on aspects of equalities including Council Equalities group, Black Lives Matter and Equalities Forum, REN, EDI and schools, LBOC 2027, City of Sanctuary and Schools of Sanctuary, London Borough of Sports, and EDI.
- g) Ensure that safeguarding vigilance is a strength of our schools and that they work effectively with the Hub and Early Help.

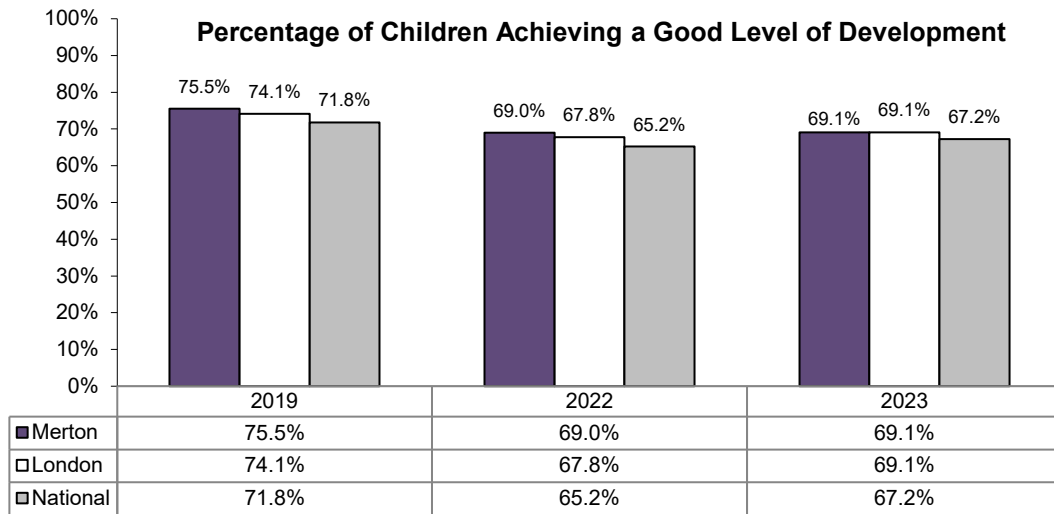
# 3. Achievement of Merton Pupils

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## Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP): performance information and analysis

- 3.1.1 Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) statistics report on teacher assessments of children’s development at the end of the early years foundation stage (EYFS), specifically the end of the academic year in which a child turns 5. This is typically the summer term of reception year.
- 3.1.2 The main purpose of the profile assessment at the end of the EYFS is to support a successful transition to Key Stage 1 (KS1) by informing the professional dialogue between EYFS and year 1 teachers. This should inform year 1 teachers about each child’s stage of development and learning needs and help them to plan the year 1 curriculum to meet the needs of all children. The EYFS profile is also used to inform parents about their child’s development.
- 3.1.3 The assessment framework, or EYFS profile, consists of 17 early learning goals (ELGs) across 7 areas of learning. Practitioners are expected to use their professional judgement to make these assessments, based on their knowledge and understanding of what the child knows, understands, and can do.
- 3.1.4 The ELGs are grouped into three ‘prime’ areas: Communication and Language; Physical Development; Personal, Social and Emotional Development. Assessments are also made in the areas of Literacy, Maths, Understanding the World, and Expressive Arts and Design.
- 3.1.5 Children are defined as having reached a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of the EYFS if they have achieved the expected level in the ELGs within the three prime areas of learning and the specific areas of mathematics and literacy. This helps teachers and parents to understand broadly what a child can do in relation to national expectations.
- 3.1.6 For each ELG, teachers must judge whether a child is: meeting the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS (expected); or not yet reaching this level (emerging) The ELGs are based on typical child development at the age of 5, so most children are likely to meet the ‘expected’ level of development. Teachers should use their professional knowledge of the child to decide whether each ELG description best fits the child’s learning and development.
- 3.1.7 Local Authorities no longer have a statutory duty to moderate teacher assessment in a proportion of schools each year. Moderation of EYFS profile assessments is expected to be a collaborative process and schools often arrange to work together so that Early Years teachers can share experiences and develop their assessment skills.
- 3.1.8 This is the second publication of EYFS statistics since the 2021/22 EYFS reforms were introduced in September 2021. As part of those reforms, the EYFSP was significantly revised. It is therefore not possible to compare the outcomes of 2022 or 2023 with the pre pandemic data of 2019.
- 3.1.9 These are also the second published statistics since 2018/19, as the 2019/20 and 2020/21 data collections were cancelled due to coronavirus (COVID-19). Children in Reception in 2022/23 would have been subject to significant disruption due to Covid between the ages of 1 and 3.

## EYFSP - headline performance information

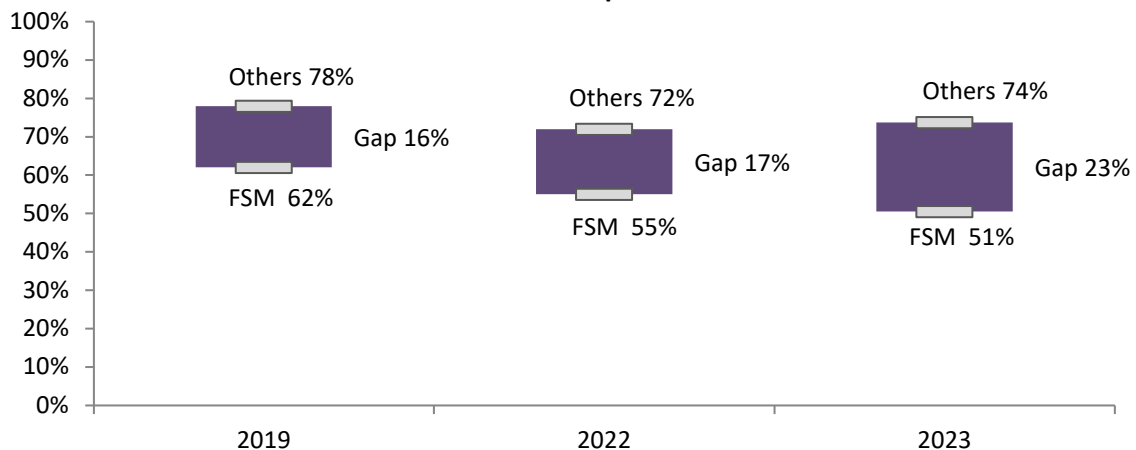


3.1.10 The proportion of children in Merton schools achieving a Good Level of Development in 2023 is 69.1%, in comparison with 69.0% in 2022. Whilst standards were maintained in comparison with the previous year, Merton remains above national outcomes, 1.9 percentage points above average and broadly in line with the London average. The lower performance in national, London and Merton percentages of pupils at GLD after the pandemic reflects the unique circumstances this cohort of pupils experienced during lockdown, as well as the changes in how their achievement was assessed and reported.

## EYFSP - main pupil groups and analysis

Contextual Groups	Number of children	% achieving a good level of development			% at expected level across all early learning goals		
		Merton	London	National	Merton	London	National
All Pupils	2243	69%	69%	67%	68%	68%	66%
<b>Gender</b>							
Female	1112	75%	76%	74%	74%	75%	73%
Male	1131	63%	63%	61%	62%	61%	59%
Gap		12%	13%	14%	12%	14%	14%
<b>Free School Meals</b>							
Free School Meals	368	51%	58%	52%	50%	56%	50%
All other pupils	1801	74%	73%	72%	73%	71%	70%
Gap		23%	15%	20%	23%	15%	20%
<b>Special Educational Needs (SEN)</b>							
No Special Educational Needs	1931	78%	77%	74%	76%	75%	72%
SEN Support	195	19%	26%	24%	19%	25%	23%
SEN (with Statement or EHC plan)	75	4%	5%	4%	4%	5%	4%
<b>Ethnic Group</b>							
White	1107	73%	72%	69%	72%	70%	67%
Asian/Asian British	338	69%	72%	69%	68%	70%	67%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	447	70%	72%	67%	68%	69%	64%
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	224	58%	63%	63%	57%	62%	61%
Other ethnic group	57	68%	63%	59%	68%	61%	57%

**Closing the gap: Free School Meals  
% Good Level of Development**





- 3.1.11 In the GLD performance measure, both girls achieve broadly in line with the London averages, and the gap between the achievement of girls and boys is similar. It is a similar picture with regard to the proportion of girls and boys achieving the expected level across all the ELGs.
- 3.1.12 In 2023 the proportion of children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) achieving the GLD is in line with the national average, and although their performance has improved, it is lower than the London average, and the gap between children eligible for Free school Meals and their peers is wider than in both London and England. Narrowing this gap is a priority for improvement in 2023/2024.
- 3.1.13 The performance of Merton children with an EHCP is similar to the London averages but the performance of pupils in receipt of SEN support is below that of the same group nationally and in London. Improving their performance is a priority for the coming year.
- 3.1.14 The performance of the ethnic groups with the largest representation of pupils in the EYFS in Merton, (White British, Asian/Asian British, Black African Caribbean/Black British, Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups). was above national averages (with the exception of 'Mixed Groups'), but below the London averages. A focus for support for EYFS leads in 2023/24 will be to identify underperforming groups and strategies to improve performance.

## 2022/23 Early Years priorities, key actions taken and impact

3.1.15

**Priority:**  
Continue to work with strong local providers to support schools to improve early language development.

**Action taken to secure improvement:**

- Targeted workshops (Nuffield Early Language Intervention, Boogie Mites, oracy projects) promoted to schools.
- Summer term focus on consistency in EYFSP assessment judgements covering Communication & Language & Literacy.
- Continued liaison with Wandle English Hub.

**Impact:**

- Communication strand of EYFSP broadly in line with national averages.

3.1.16

**Priority:**  
Continue to close the attainment gap so that similar proportions of boys and girls achieve a Good Level of Development.

**Action taken to secure improvement:**  
Joint Equalities training was undertaken by the Early years and Equalities advisors for staff in Early years settings across the Borough.

**Impact:**  
The performance of both boys and girls with regards to the Good Level of Development is above the national averages.

3.1.17

**Priority:**

Narrow the gap for children eligible for Free School Meals and improve outcomes for Black/African/Caribbean and Asian/Asian British children.

**Actions taken to secure impact:**

- Joint Equalities training with EY & Equalities advisor for EYFS staff
- Traveller team presented at EY leaders meeting.

**Impact:**

- Traveller teams service used effectively in schools where the Traveller population is higher.
- The gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers has widened.
- The performance of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British children has improved by eight percentage points with regard to the GLD.

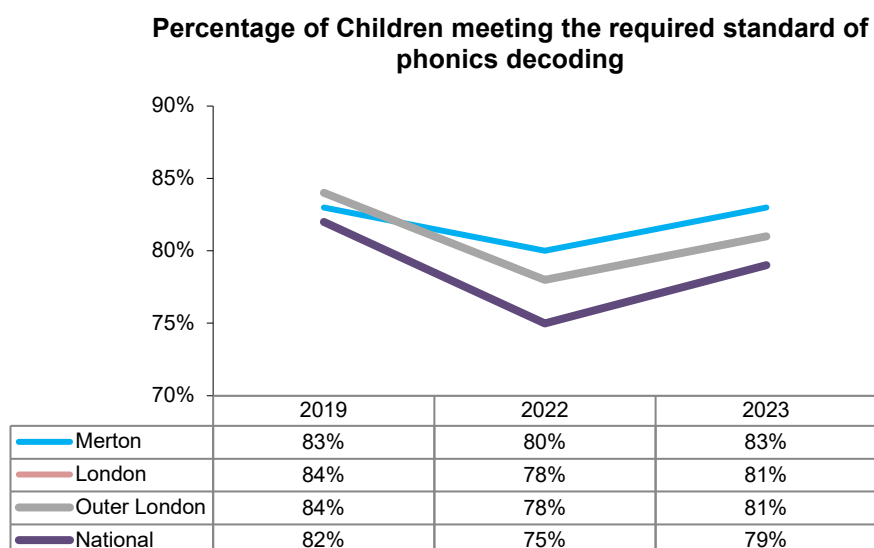
## Early Years Priorities for 2023/2024

- a) Based on projected admissions figures, support schools to develop appropriate models of provision where needed
- b) Support schools to develop their EYFS arrangements in the context of the Government's national expansion of Early Years provision.
- c) Ensure a continued focus on the achievement of Global Majority groups, so that gaps narrow, if not close, with their white peers.
- d) Narrow the achievement gap for pupils eligible for Free School Meals.
- e) To ensure the best provision is in place for children with SEND in mainstream and additionally resourced provision.

## Year 1 Phonics Screening Check: performance information and analysis

- 3.2.1 The Phonics Screening Check is a reading test based on pupils’ ability to recognise words and sounds using phonic decoding strategies. Pupils’ performance is reported on the basis of whether they have achieved the expected standard or not. There are no grades. All pupils in Year 1 are expected to be checked unless they have no phoneme/grapheme correspondence (i.e. they are unable to link letters on the page to the sound they make). The small numbers of pupils that do not achieve the expected standard in Year 1 are rechecked at the end of Year 2.
- 3.2.2 These are the second Year 1 phonics screening check statistics since 2019, after assessments were cancelled in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic. Although phonics screening tests were undertaken in Autumn 2020 and Autumn 2021, this was for year 2 pupils and the data has not been published.

### Year 1 Phonics - headline performance information and analysis

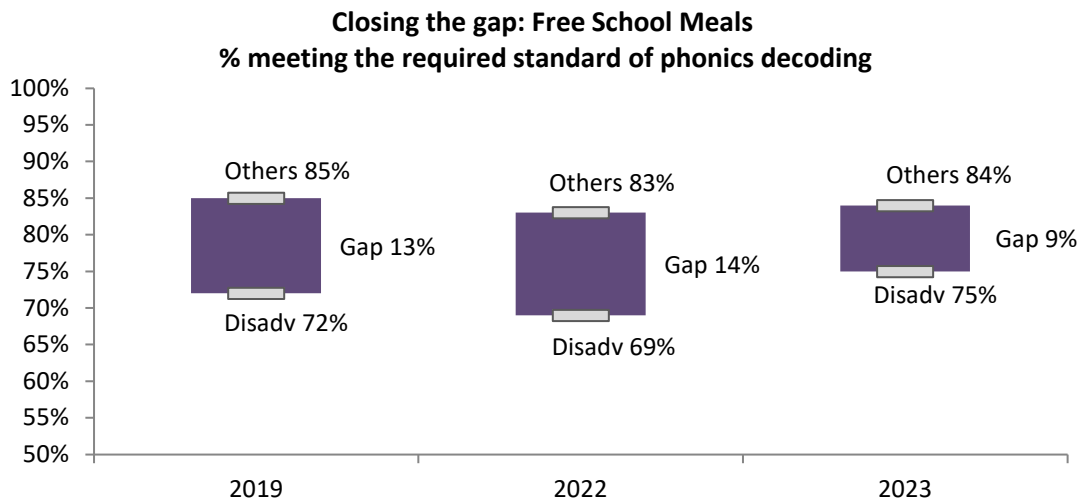


- 3.2.3 83% of pupils reached the expected standard for phonics decoding in Merton; this is above London and above national averages, represents a three percentage point improvement in comparison with 2022 and brings standards in line with Merton’s performance before the pandemic.
- 3.2.4 Merton’s performance ranks 11<sup>th</sup> in the country in this indicator.

## Year 1 Phonics main pupil groups and analysis

Contextual Groups	Number of Pupils	% meeting the required standard of phonics decoding		
		Merton	London	National
All Pupils	2199	83%	81%	79%
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	1067	85%	84%	82%
Male	1132	80%	78%	76%
Gap		5%	6%	6%
<b>Disadvantaged</b>				
Disadvantaged pupils	455	75%	73%	66%
Non disadvantaged	1744	84%	83%	82%
Gap		-9%	-10%	-16%
<b>Special Educational Needs (SEN)</b>				
No Special Educational Needs	1844	89%	88%	86%
SEN Support	244	58%	57%	48%
SEN (with Statement or EHC plan)	83	33%	24%	20%
<b>Ethnic Group</b>				
White	1125	83%	82%	79%
Asian	475	87%	85%	82%
Black	292	83%	78%	78%
Mixed	210	80%	82%	81%
Any other ethnic group	292	83%	78%	75%
Unclassified	40	45%	58%	57%

\* Disadvantaged is FSM



3.2.4 The performance of girls is broadly in line with the London average and 3 percentage points above the national average. The performance of boys is four percentage points above the national, and two percentage points above the London average. The gap between boys and girls is five percentage points (slightly smaller than the gaps seen nationally and locally).

3.2.5 Addressing the needs of disadvantaged pupils has been an ongoing national priority. The gap between disadvantaged and non disadvantaged pupils narrowed in 2023 from 14% in 2022 to 9% in 2023.

Nationally this gap is 16%, whilst in London the gap is 10%. This is a positive improvement for Merton's disadvantaged children.

- 3.2.6 The gap between pupils eligible for SEN support and their peers remains wide (31 percentage points) although this is 4% lower than in 2022 . It is narrower than the gap seen nationally but in line with London. 33% of pupils with EHCPs reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check, which is higher (11 percentage points) than the same cohort in London and 13 percentage points above national. Whilst there is a variance from last year, this cohort is 83 children out of a cohort of 2199 children and so the varying needs of each cohort can make a significant difference to outcomes.
- 3.2.7 The largest ethnic groups are White, Asian, Black and the Mixed heritage group, with Asian pupils outperforming all other groups in Merton. The performance of each of these ethnic groups exceeded the averages for the same groups nationally, including for Black students who were below national and London figures and are now 5% above both. This cohort were a focus group last academic year.

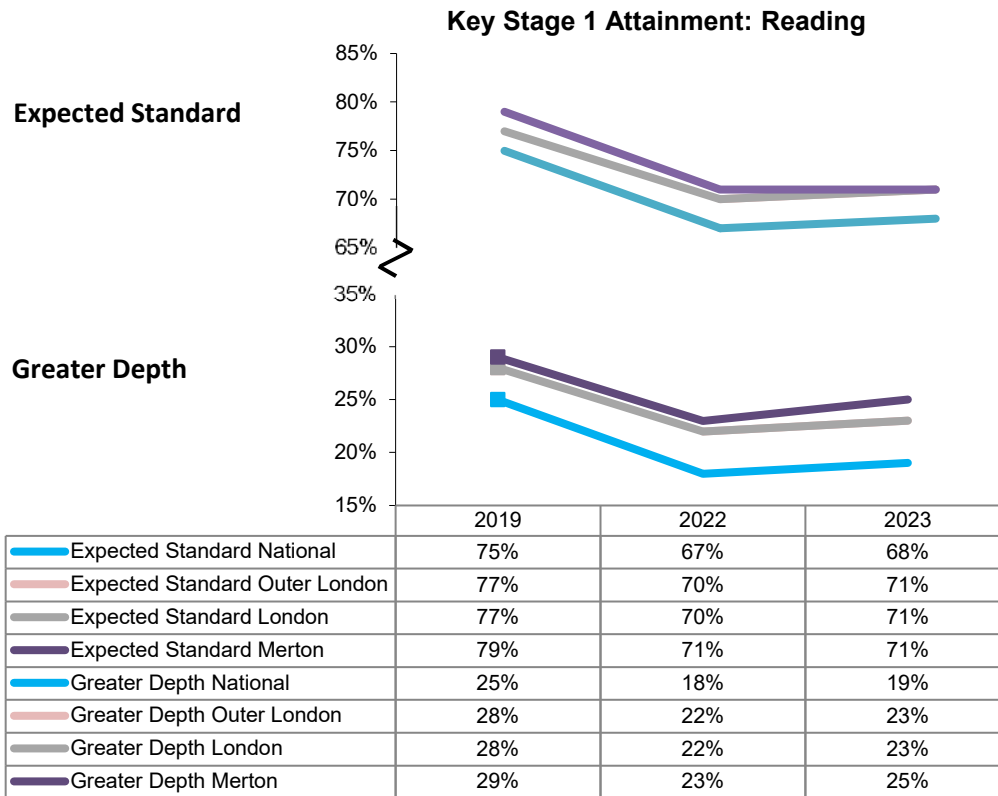
# Key Stage 1: performance information and analysis

3.3.1 These are the second Key Stage 1 attainment statistics since 2019, because assessments were cancelled in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic

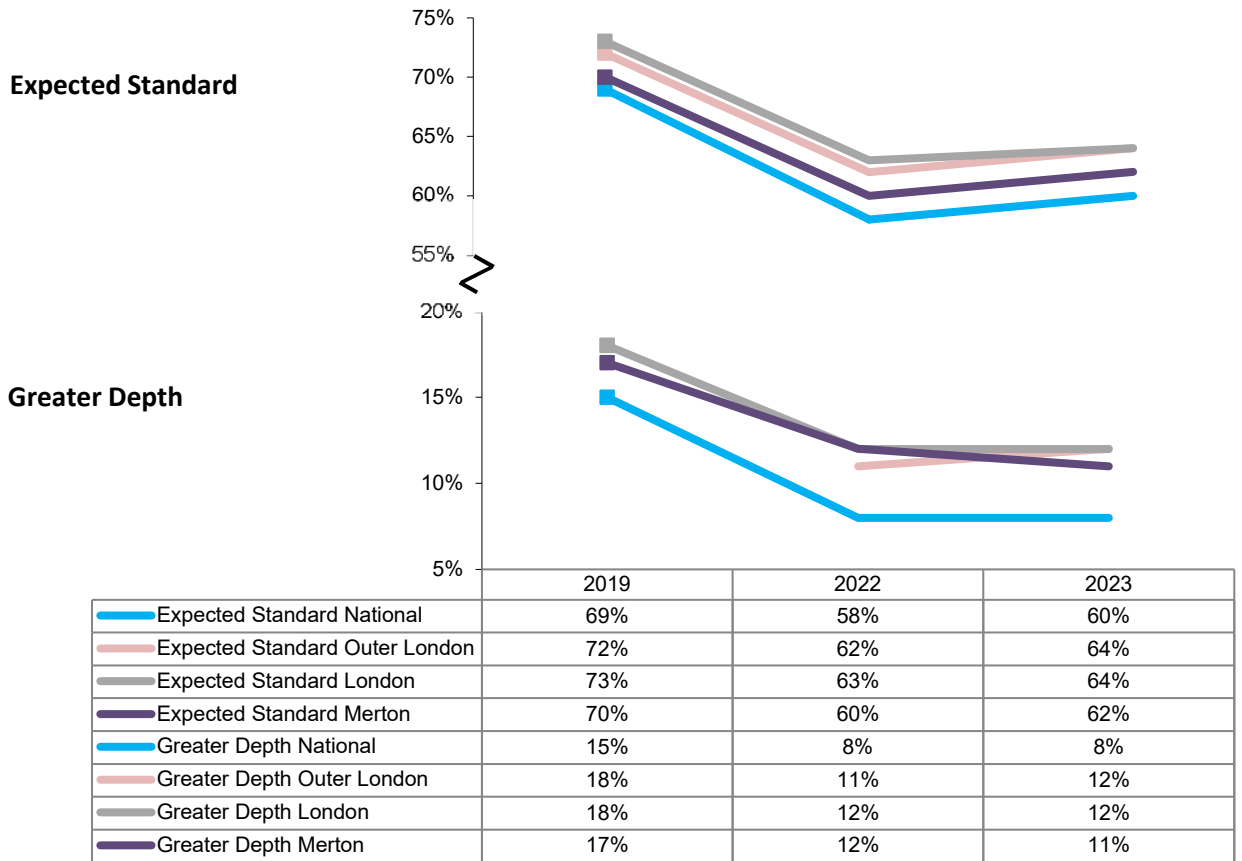
3.3.2 Teacher assessment judgments in reading, writing, maths and science are reported for each pupil at the end of Key Stage 1 (typically aged 7). Teacher assessments are based on a broad range of evidence from across the curriculum and knowledge of how a pupil has performed over time and in a variety of contexts. Pupils are assessed relative to the ‘Expected Standard’, in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are judged to be working:

- towards the expected standard;
- at the expected standard; or
- at greater depth

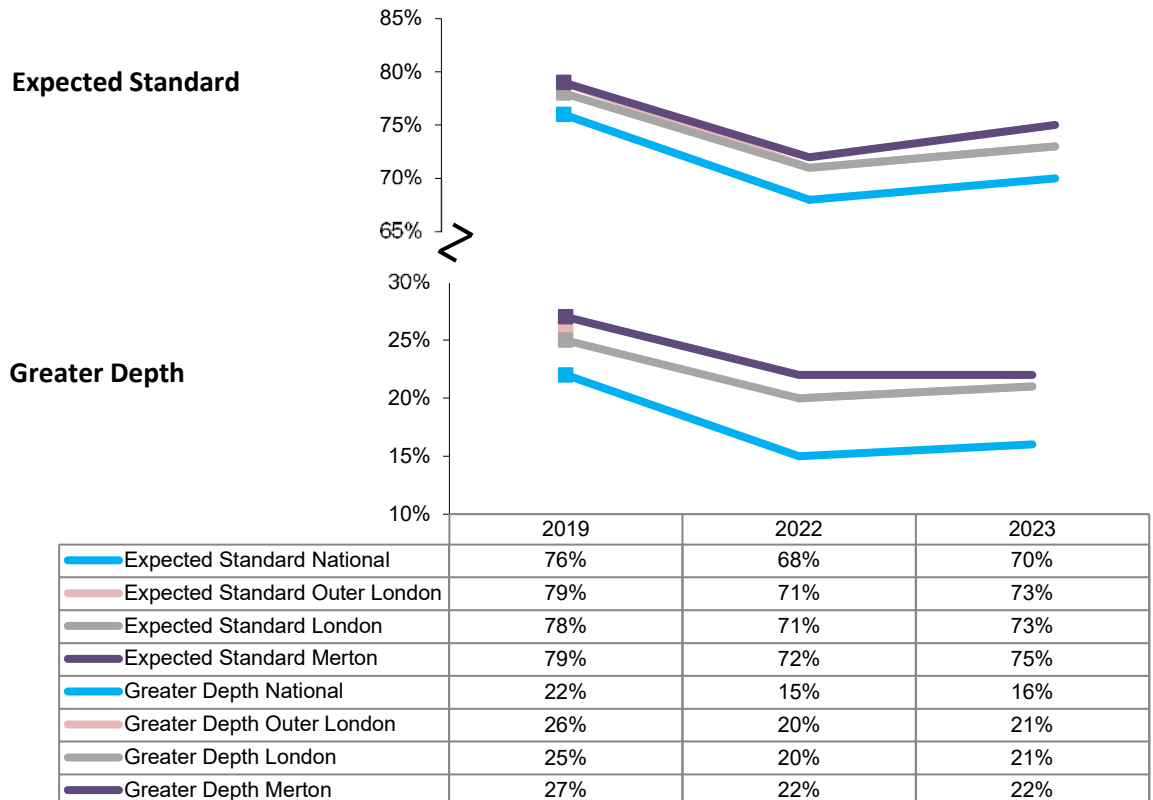
## KS1 - headline performance information and analysis



### Key Stage 1 Attainment: Writing



### Key Stage 1 Attainment: Maths

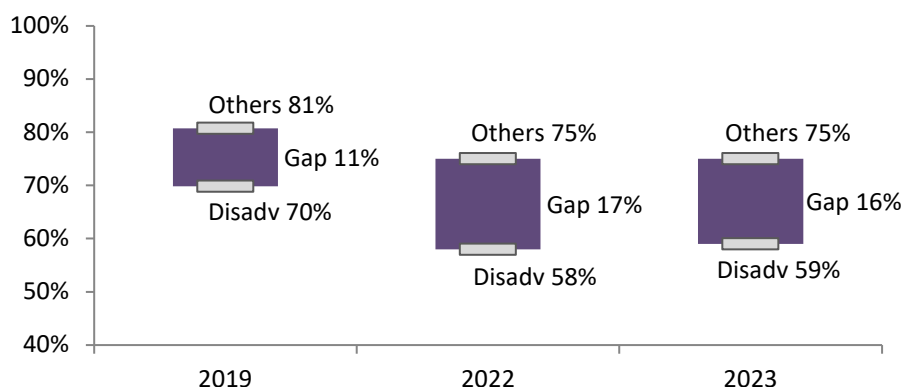


- 3.3.3 In the expected standard for reading, performance was maintained at 71%, placing Merton in line with London and 2 percentage points above the national average. At greater depth standard, Merton pupils were 6 percentage points above national averages, and 2 percentage points above London, ranking the Local Authority 4<sup>th</sup> in the country.
- 3.34 Writing will continue to be an area of focus. Whilst our outcomes place us 2 percentage points above national averages, we are 2 percentage points below London. At greater depth, there has been a slight decline which reflects the national figures, whilst London has not mirrored this pattern.
- 3.3.4 Mathematics showed an upward trend in 2023, placing Merton five percentage points above national figures and 2 percentage points above London ranking the Local Authority 9th nationally. At greater depth standard, Merton’s performance is one percentage point above London, and 5 percentage points above national figures.

## KS1 – main pupil groups and analysis

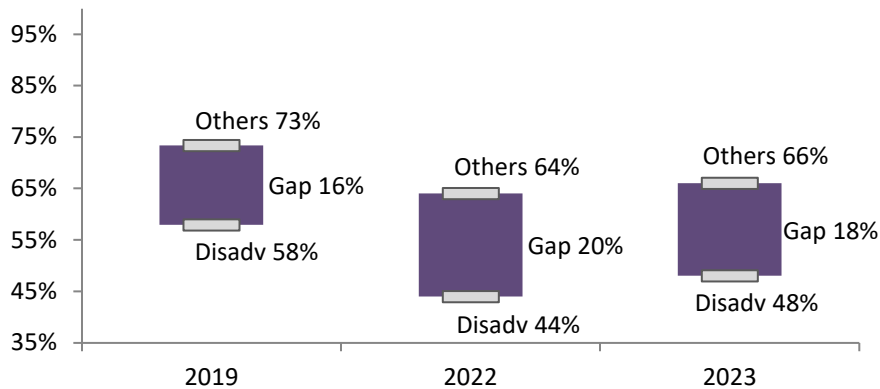
Contextual Groups	Number of Pupils	% reaching the expected standard in reading			% reaching the expected standard in writing			% reaching the expected standard in maths		
		Merton	London	National	Merton	London	National	Merton	London	National
All Pupils	2241	71%	71%	68%	62%	64%	60%	75%	73%	70%
<b>Gender</b>										
Female	1068	73%	75%	72%	67%	70%	66%	74%	74%	70%
Male	1173	69%	67%	65%	57%	59%	54%	75%	72%	71%
Gap		4%	8%	7%	10%	11%	12%	-1%	2%	-1%
<b>Disadvantaged</b>										
Disadvantaged	553	59%	61%	54%	48%	54%	44%	59%	62%	56%
All other pupils	1688	75%	74%	73%	66%	68%	65%	80%	77%	75%
Gap		16%	13%	19%	18%	14%	21%	21%	15%	19%
<b>Special Educational Needs (SEN)</b>										
No Special Educational Needs	1831	80%	80%	77%	71%	73%	69%	83%	81%	79%
SEN Support	274	32%	39%	32%	22%	30%	22%	39%	44%	37%
SEN (with Statement or EHC plan)	106	31%	15%	12%	17%	10%	8%	28%	17%	15%
<b>Ethnic Group</b>										
White	1116	72%	71%	68%	61%	64%	60%	76%	74%	71%
Asian	519	71%	75%	70%	64%	70%	64%	77%	78%	73%
Black	212	64%	69%	69%	57%	62%	61%	64%	68%	68%
Mixed	275	77%	74%	71%	70%	67%	62%	78%	74%	71%
Any other ethnic group	63	57%	64%	59%	49%	58%	53%	65%	69%	65%
Unclassified	56	48%	53%	50%	38%	47%	43%	55%	55%	52%

**Closing the gap: Disadvantaged**

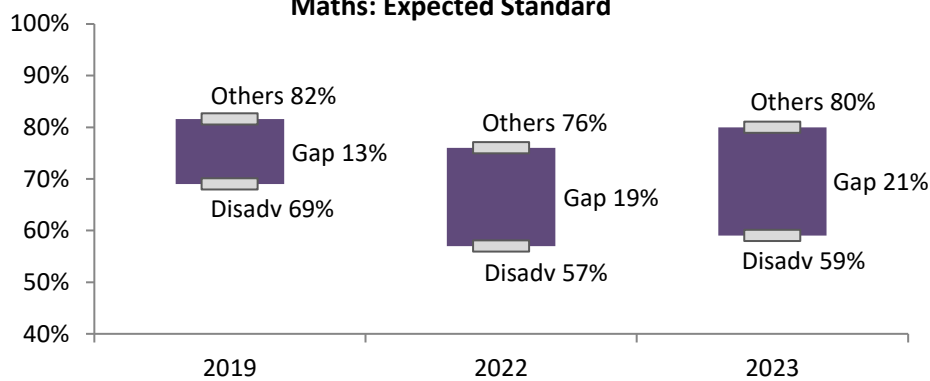




**Closing the gap: Disadvantaged  
Writing: Expected Standard**



**Closing the gap: Disadvantaged  
Maths: Expected Standard**



3.3.5 Girls outperformed boys in reading by four percentage points, and 10 percentage points gap in writing. In maths boys outperformed girls by one percentage point.

3.3.6 The gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers narrowed by one percentage point in reading, and by two percentage points in writing. In mathematics it widened by two percentage points. When compared to national and London figures, gaps were narrower than national but slightly higher than London in reading and writing, but slightly wider than both in mathematics.

3.3.7 The performance for pupils in receipt of SEND support, was either in line with or just above the national, but lower than London.

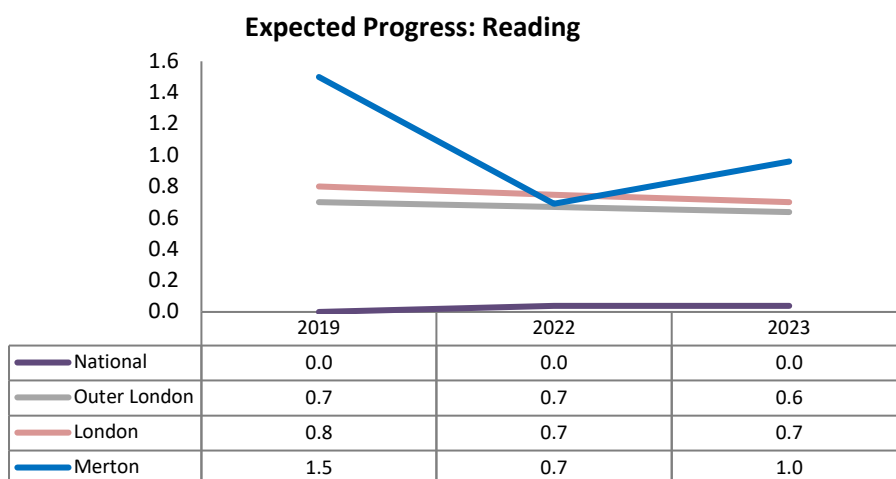
3.3.8 The small cohort of 106 pupils with an EHCP achieved better than their peers across London and nationally in each subject and particularly in reading and maths.

3.3.9 The two largest ethnic groups at this key stage (White and Asian) showed some small fluctuations against London and national date. Black children performed slightly below London and national whilst those of dual heritage performed above London and national.

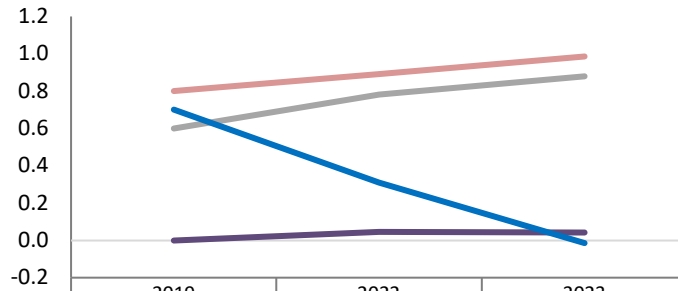
## Key Stage 2: performance information and analysis

- 3.4.1 KS2 standard assessments and tests in reading, writing and maths were re-introduced in 2022, having been cancelled in summer 2020 and again in 2021 because of the pandemic. The DFE urges caution in comparing the outcomes of 2022 with those of 2023 due to different methodologies in calculating results. This cohort of children experienced disruption to their learning during the pandemic, particularly at the end of year 3 and in year 4. Year 6 pupils were tested in reading, mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling. They were also teacher assessed in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils are assessed relative to the 'Expected Standards', in reading, writing and mathematics.
- 3.4.2 Each pupil receives their test results as a scaled score whilst teacher assessment judgements are based on whether they are working below the expected standard, at the expected standard or working at greater depth within the expected standard. The expected standard in reading and mathematics tests is a scaled score of 100 or above. The expected standard in writing is a teacher assessment of 'working at the expected standard' (EXS). A higher standard is a scaled score of 110 or more in reading and mathematics, and pupils assessed as working at greater depth within the expected standard (GDS) in writing. From 2021/22 pre-key stage standards were used to report teacher assessment in English reading, English writing and mathematics for pupils working below the standard of national curriculum assessments engaged in subject-specific study.
- 3.4.3 Pupils' progress across KS2 is also calculated at the end of Year 6. These are 'value-added' progress measures which mean that pupils' results are compared to the actual achievements of other pupils nationally with similar prior attainment. Progress scores are calculated for each of reading, writing and mathematics.

### KS2 - headline performance information and analysis

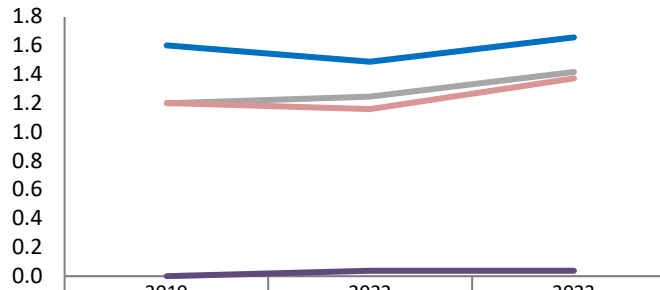


### Expected Progress: Writing



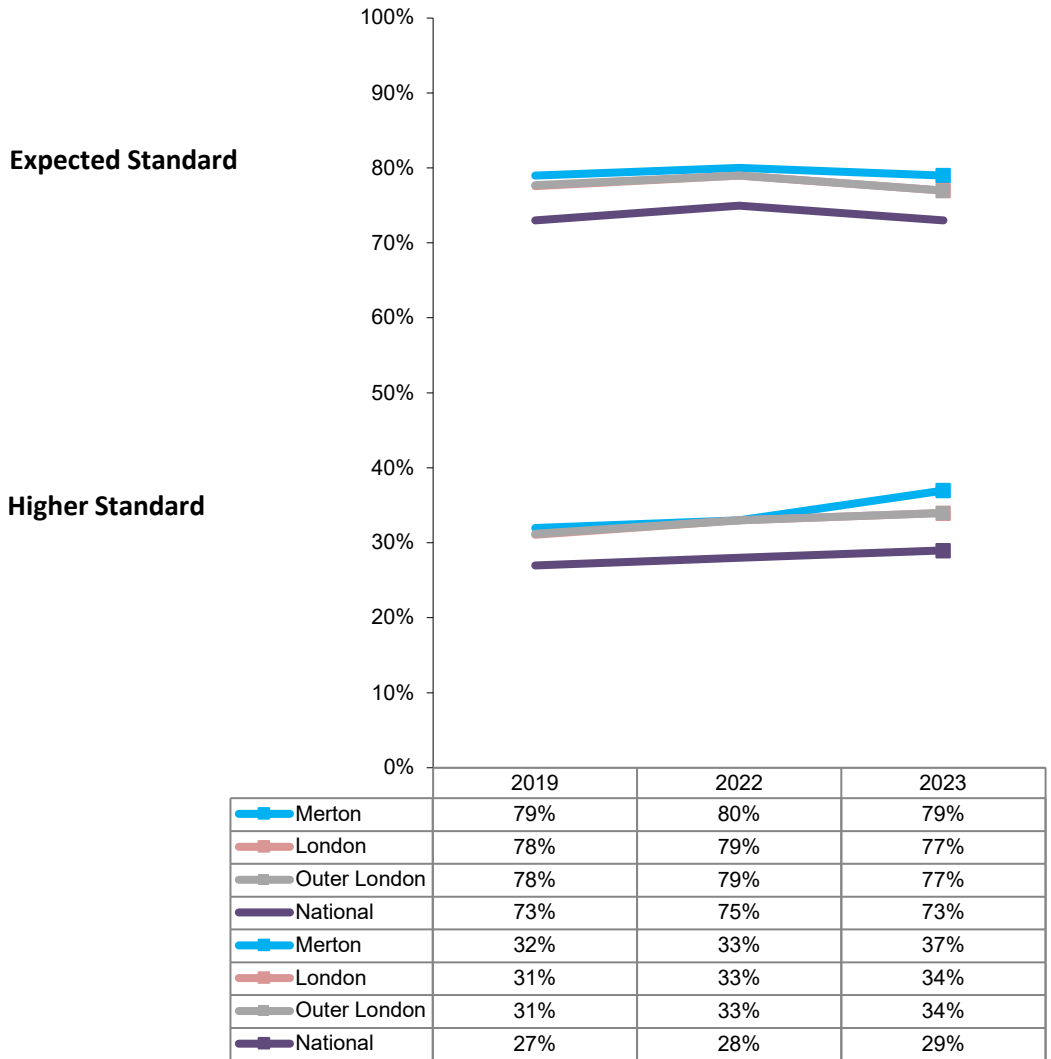
	2019	2022	2023
National	0.0	0.0	0.0
Outer London	0.6	0.8	0.9
London	0.8	0.9	1.0
Merton	0.7	0.3	0.0

### Expected Progress: Maths

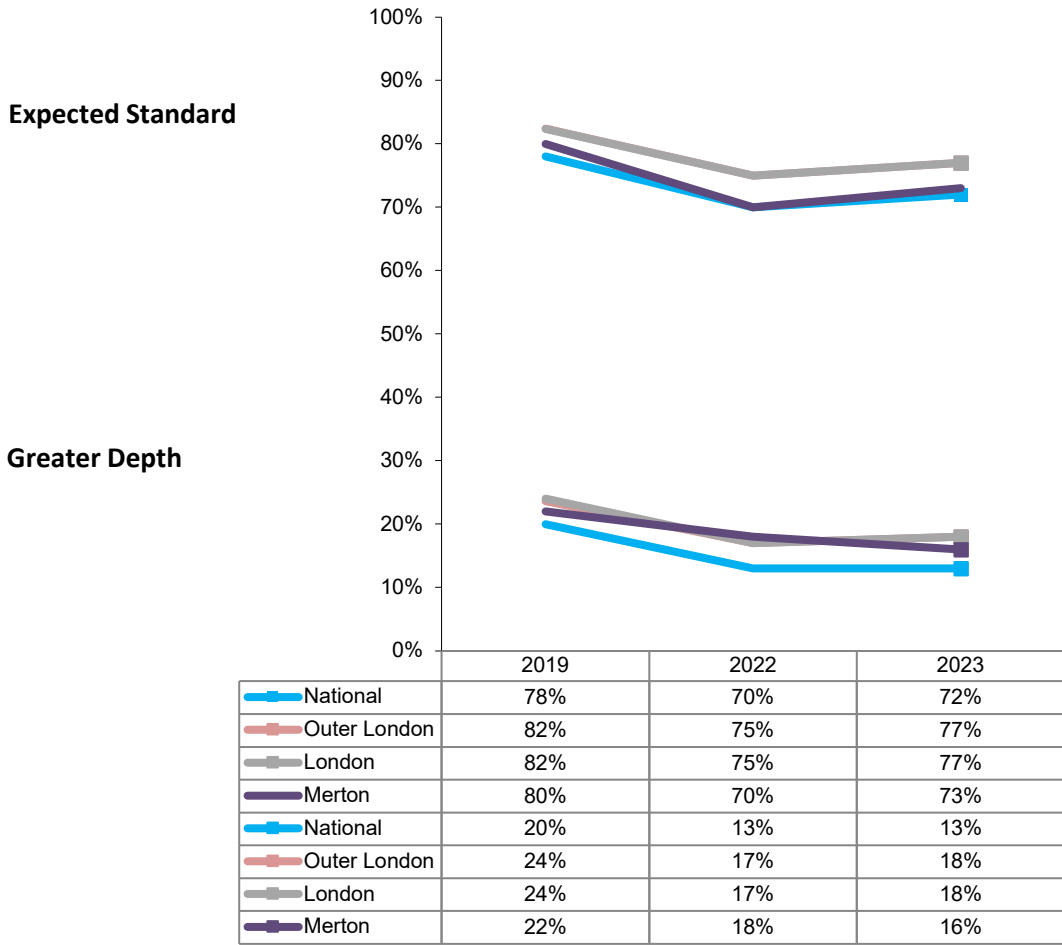


	2019	2022	2023
National	0.0	0.0	0.0
Outer London	1.2	1.2	1.4
London	1.2	1.2	1.4
Merton	1.6	1.5	1.7

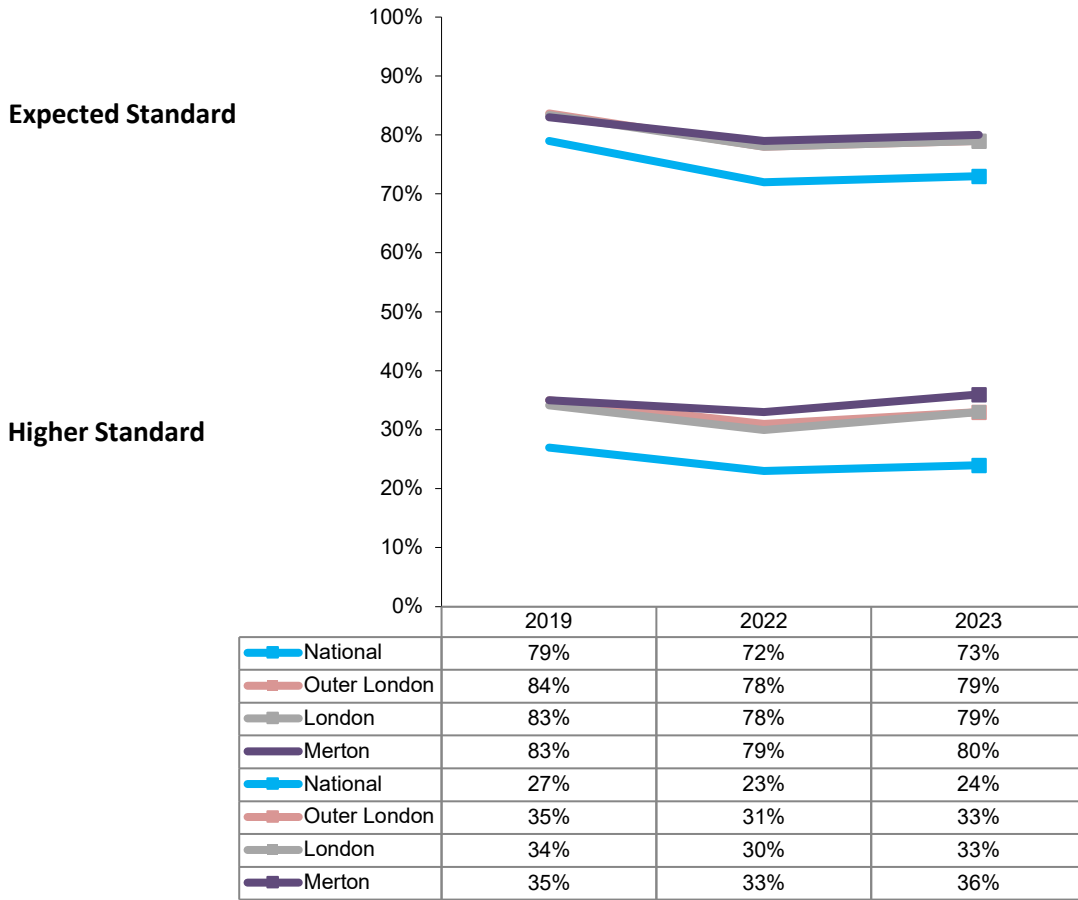
### Key Stage 2 Attainment (2019-2023): Reading



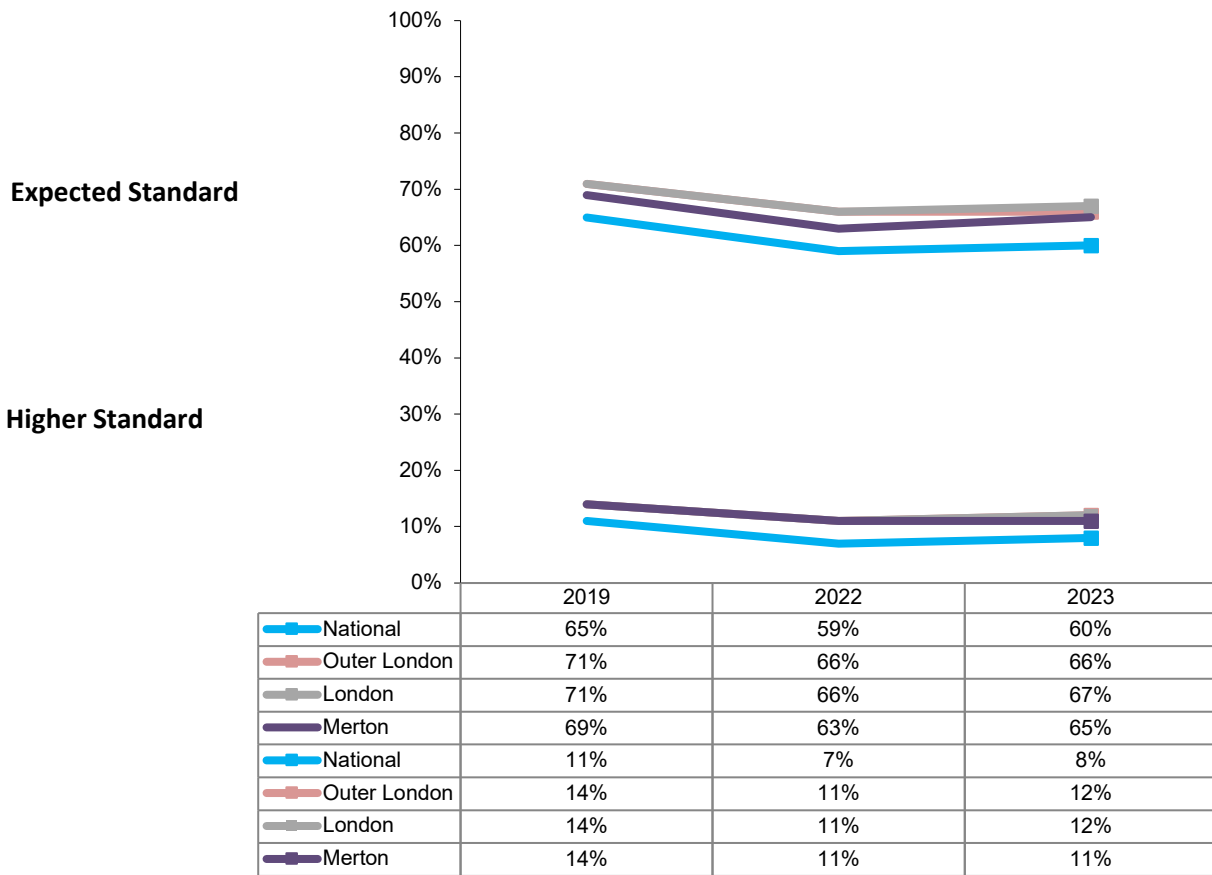
### Key Stage 2 Attainment (2019-2023): Writing



### Key Stage 2 Attainment (2019-2023): Maths



### Key Stage 2 Attainment (2019-2023): Reading, writing and mathematics



- 3.4.4 Expected progress in KS2 reading, which dipped to broadly in line with national immediately post pandemic, is now improving at a faster rate than both national and London in 2023. Similarly, mathematics expected progress is higher than both national and London averages. In writing there has been a dip in progress that needs to be addressed. Whilst attainment is in line with national averages, we need to highlight to schools the relative underperformance in this subject.
- 3.4.5 In reading and mathematics, the attainment of pupils at both the expected and higher standards was above both national and London averages, ranking us 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> across all LAs with regards to the higher standards in reading and maths respectively.
- 3.4.6 At Key Stage 2, writing was the curriculum area most impacted by the pandemic. Nationally there was a dip of eight percentage points at the expected standard and in Merton pupil outcomes fell by ten percentage points. Whilst there has been a three-percentage point improvement between 2022 and 2023, and we remain above national at the expected standard, we are four percentage points below London. The same picture can be seen at higher standard where we are above national but two percentage points below London.
- 3.4.7 In turn, the combined figure, those children who have achieved expected standard in reading and writing and mathematics, has been affected by writing outcomes. There has been an overall improvement of two percentage points in the combined score, placing us five percentage points above national, but two percentage points below London. At the higher standard, Merton maintained its

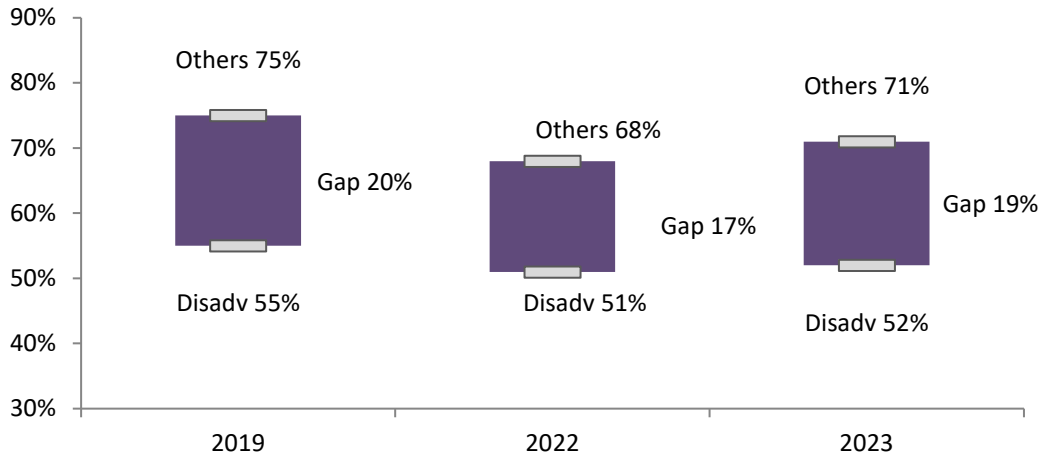
performance at 11%, which is three percentage points above national but one percentage point below London.

## KS2 - main pupil groups and analysis

Contextual Groups	Number of Pupils	% reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths			Value Added progress score in reading			Value Added progress score in writing			Value Added progress score in maths		
		Merton	London	National	Merton	London	National	Merton	London	National	Merton	London	National
All Pupils	2,154	65%	67%	60%	1.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.7	1.4	0.0
<b>Gender</b>													
Girls	1,088	68%	70%	63%	1.3	1.0	0.3	0.7	1.7	0.9	1.2	0.7	-0.8
Boys	1,066	62%	63%	57%	0.6	0.4	-0.2	-0.8	0.3	-0.8	2.1	2.0	0.8
Gap		6%	7%	6%	0.7	0.6	0.5	1.5	1.5	1.6	0.9	1.3	1.6
<b>Disadvantaged</b>													
Disadvantaged	711	52%	54%	44%	0.0	-0.1	-0.9	-0.6	0.4	-0.7	0.3	0.2	-1.0
Not known to be disadvantaged	1,443	71%	73%	67%	1.5	1.1	0.4	0.3	1.3	0.4	2.4	2.0	0.5
Gap		19%	19%	23%	1.5	1.3	1.3	0.9	0.8	1.1	2.1	1.8	1.6
<b>Prior Attainment (Key Stage 1)</b>													
Low	Unavailable												
Middle	Unavailable												
High	Unavailable												
<b>Special Educational Needs (SEN)</b>													
No Sen	1,671	77%	76%	70%	1.5	1.1	0.4	0.7	1.5	0.6	2.4	1.8	0.5
SEN Support	330	25%	34%	24%	0.3	0.3	-0.6	-1.8	-0.2	-1.5	0.2	0.4	-0.8
EHC Plan	142	12%	11%	8%	-3.6	-3.5	-4.4	-4.4	-2.9	-4.4	-3.6	-2.8	-4.1
<b>Ethnic Group</b>													
White British	572	63%	66%	59%	0.9	0.8	-0.1	-0.6	0.3	-0.4	0.1	0.2	-0.6
White Other	418	66%	66%	61%	1.9	1.2	0.9	-0.1	1.6	1.3	2.7	2.3	1.9
Black African	180	61%	66%	63%	1.4	0.2	0.2	1.7	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.8	0.8
Black Caribbean	58	50%	51%	50%	-0.8	-0.6	-0.7	-2.0	0.0	-0.2	-2.0	-1.3	-1.4
White & Black Caribbean	73	56%	54%	50%	-0.1	0.0	-0.5	-0.9	-0.2	-0.7	0.4	-1.1	-1.5
Other mixed background	109	61%	68%	64%	0.2	0.9	0.5	0.2	1.0	0.6	0.1	0.8	0.5
Indian	80	71%	75%	74%	2.7	1.0	0.8	1.4	1.6	1.4	5.3	3.8	3.4
Bangladeshi	19	74%	72%	68%	2.0	0.9	0.6	-0.3	1.8	1.5	4.1	2.7	2.3
Pakistani	102	68%	70%	60%	0.4	0.4	-0.2	0.4	1.1	0.6	3.2	2.2	1.4
Other Asian background	238	74%	73%	68%	-0.1	0.6	0.6	0.5	1.4	1.4	4.6	3.6	3.1

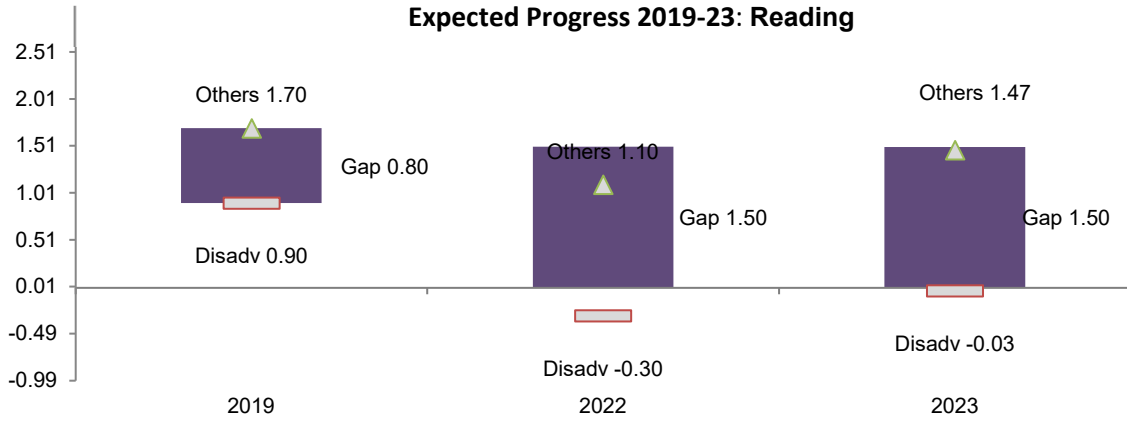


**Closing the gap: Disadvantaged**  
**Expected Standard in Reading, Writing and Maths 2019-23**



**Closing the gap: Disadvantaged**

**Expected Progress 2019-23: Reading**



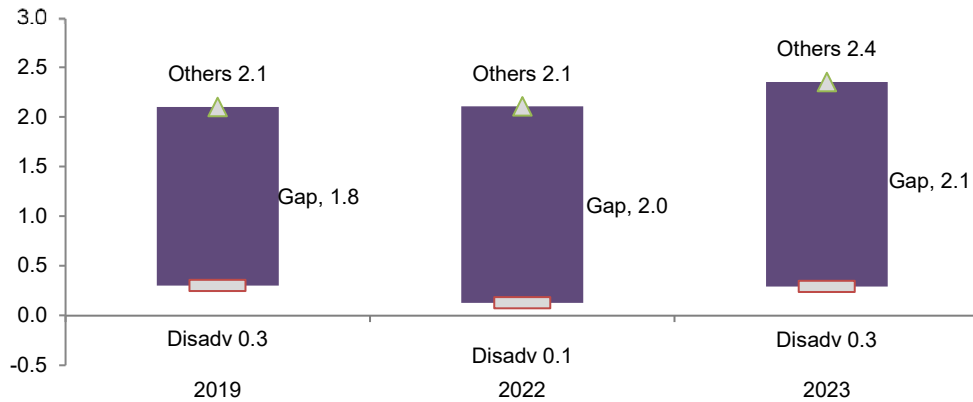
**Closing the gap: Disadvantaged**

**Expected Progress 2019-23 Writing**



## Closing the gap: Disadvantaged

### Expected Progress 2019-23: Maths



- 3.4.8 Girls continued to outperform boys with regard to both attainment and progress in reading and writing; the reverse continues to be the case in mathematics.
- 3.4.9 Disadvantaged pupils in Merton attained 51.9% for reading, writing and maths combined at the end of Key Stage 2. This was below the national average for all pupils but 7.7 percentage points above the national average for disadvantaged pupils. The gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers in combined figures, has broadly remained the same.
- 3.4.10 Pupils in receipt of SEN support pupils make better progress than the same group nationally in reading; maths is also a positive progress score, which is above national but a little below London. However, progress in writing for this group needs to improve as it is slightly below national and below London.
- 3.4.11 The cohort of children with EHCPs is relatively small, but whilst their attainment is above that of their peers nationally and in London, their progress from the KS1 starting point, needs to improve, particularly in writing.
- 3.4.12 The attainment in reading, writing and mathematics combined at the end of Key Stage 2 for Black African and Mixed (White and Black African) were close to the national average for all pupils. However, outcomes were below the same comparator for other groups of Black pupils. This reflects improved outcomes for Black African, Black Caribbean and Mixed (White and Black Caribbean) pupils but a decline for Mixed (White and Black African).

## 2022/23 Primary phase priorities, impact and key actions taken

3.4.13

**Priority:**

Further embed and improve primary writing outcomes at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

**Actions taken to secure impact:**

- Central training on 'Meeting the needs of pupils not yet working at ARE in writing'.
- Training delivered in individual schools on targeting provision to meet the needs of pupils working below age related expectations.
- Central training on supporting writing through LKS2.
- Individual school support focussing on writing provision, writing curricula, text choices.
- Book lists produced to support diversity in resourcing for reading and writing lessons (e.g. gender, different families, differently abled characters)

**Impact:**

- Outcomes in the primary phase are above national averages
- Schools report feeling well supported to improve outcomes
- However there remains a relative underperformance in this subject (in comparison with reading and writing) which requires further focus.

3.4.14

**Priority:**

Further improve outcomes in the phonics screening check for boys, disadvantaged and Black pupils.

**Actions taken to secure impact:**

- Support for phonics development in individual schools
- Focus on Systematic Synthetic Phonics programme implementation as part of subject leaders' network meetings.
- Analysis of school data with subject leaders to identify gaps in attainment for pupil groups.
- Focus on data analysis for pupil groups in individual meetings with subject leaders – identifying target groups and advising on approaches to improve provision/ close gaps

**Impact:**

- Merton boys' attainment at 80.3% is 2.2% below 'Merton all', but 4.8% above boys nationally. This shows an improvement of 3.2% on Merton's Year 1 boys in 2022.
- Disadvantaged pupils' attainment at 75.6% is 6.9% below 'Merton all' but 8.8% above disadvantaged pupils nationally. This shows an improvement of 6.6% on Merton's disadvantaged pupils in Year 1 in 2022
- Black pupils' attainment at 79.5% is 3% below 'Merton all' but 1.5% above black pupils nationally. This shows an improvement of 8.7% on Merton's black pupils in Year 1 in 2022.

3.4.15

**Priority:** Support schools in addressing the oracy needs of pupils post-pandemic through support for schools including training and sharing examples of good practice.

**Actions taken to secure impact:**

- Working party started in September 2022 with representatives from Merton primary schools, researching best practice and working together to devise materials to be used in Merton schools.
- Central training delivered on building oracy skills.
- Focus on oracy in English subject leaders meeting.

**Impact:**

- Oracy package launched October 2023- impact yet to be seen.
- Pilot schools are trialling oracy approaches.
- Schools are identifying subject vocabulary.
- Schools demonstrating a heightened awareness around the importance of oracy.

3.4.16

**Priority:** Support schools to continue to embed a mastery approach to the teaching of mathematics which is inclusive of SEND pupils.

**Actions taken to secure impact:**

- Joint SENCO forum and mathematics subject leaders' meeting, where the SENCO and subject leader (SL) worked together on aspects of SEN provision within the subject, to ensure there is a consistent approach to advice provided by both the SL and SENCO within the school. Delivered jointly with the SEND adviser;
- Regular session within the SL meetings on provision for pupils with SEND, focussing on different aspects of classroom practice;
- A greater request from schools for staff training on adaptation for pupils with SEND. This has been tailored for individual schools' needs and their approach to teaching the mathematics curriculum.

**Impact:**

- Growing confidence of SLs and teacher in adapting learning for SEND within a mastery context
- KS2 attainment for pupils on SEN Support is above the national average and in-line with Merton's pre-pandemic attainment (2019)  
Progress for pupils on SEN Support is positive at 0.26 and above 2022 and 2019 (pre-pandemic)

3.4.17

**Priority:** Improve outcomes for Black Caribbean and Black African pupils at all key stages and analyse the achievement of each of those groups separately.

**Actions taken to secure impact:**

- Collection and analysis of a range of data to identify outcomes for global majority groups.
- Governor training with specific focus on equalities and preparation for governor visits/headteacher performance management
- Provided training for school leaders, teachers, support staff and governors as part of the central professional development programme - Understanding and Overcoming Unconscious Bias.
- Tackling Race Inequality in BAME staffing – the role of leaders and governors. (Professor Paul Miller)

**Impact:**

- In 2023, the attainment in reading, writing and mathematics combined at the end of Key Stage 2 for Black African and Mixed (White and Black African) were close to the national average for all pupils. However, outcomes were below the same comparator for other groups of Black pupils. This reflects improved outcomes for Black African, Black Caribbean and Mixed (White and Black Caribbean) pupils but a decline for Mixed (White and Black African).
- Feedback and positive evaluations from the Governor support team in relation to equalities training.
- Refreshed Black Lives Matter strategy and consulted with community groups.
- Positive feedback for 'Faces & Places: A Black History Month Photography Competition for Merton Schools 2023'

3.4.18

**Priority:** Further support schools to strengthen their pupil premium strategies and narrow the gaps for disadvantaged pupils.

**Actions taken to secure impact:**

- National best practice from the National Disadvantaged Conference 'Better Serving Underserved Learners' shared with schools.
- Joint school visits by Equalities Adviser and Merton Education Partners to focus on provision and learning for Pupil Premium pupils.
- Provision of updates and guidance for schools through visits to schools and briefings and network meetings.
- Support for schools with writing their Pupil Premium strategy and evaluating the impact.
- Training for governors and Pupil Premium leads.
- Supported new Pupil Premium leads.
- Reviewed Pupil Premium information on school websites.

**Impact:**

- Schools report increased confidence about available Pupil Premium funding and its use.
- Schools sharing effective practice, drawing on Education Endowment Foundation research and local practice.
- Schools demonstrating their understanding and use of the Recovery Premium.
- Disadvantaged pupils in Merton attained 51.9% for reading, writing and maths combined at the end of Key Stage 2. This was below the national average for all pupils but 7.7 percentage points above the national average for disadvantaged pupils.

3.4.19

**Priority:** Continue to support leaders in their delivery of a broad and rich curriculum and further develop the skills of middle leaders in the foundation subjects, in sequencing content and supporting class teachers to help children retain key knowledge and apply it to their new learning.

**Actions taken to secure impact:**

- Let's talk History & Let's talk Geography groups established, facilitated by Merton officers: discussions focussed on individual school curricula, Ofsted reviews and what outstanding practice looks like
- Green Schools' Network established (primary, secondary, special and independent schools) with Merton's Climate Engagement team, supporting schools in all aspects of the Climate agenda, including curriculum work

**Impact:**

- Regular and increasing attendance at History and Geography sessions.
- Ofsted inspections show that progression in foundation subjects is clearly identified and that subjects are well lead, although some schools need further work on use of assessment information and insuring learning is embedded.
- Numbers in attendance at Green Schools' Network is growing and schools are grateful for the support. Some schools are establishing Eco-Warrior/ Green councils to involve pupils in this important work.

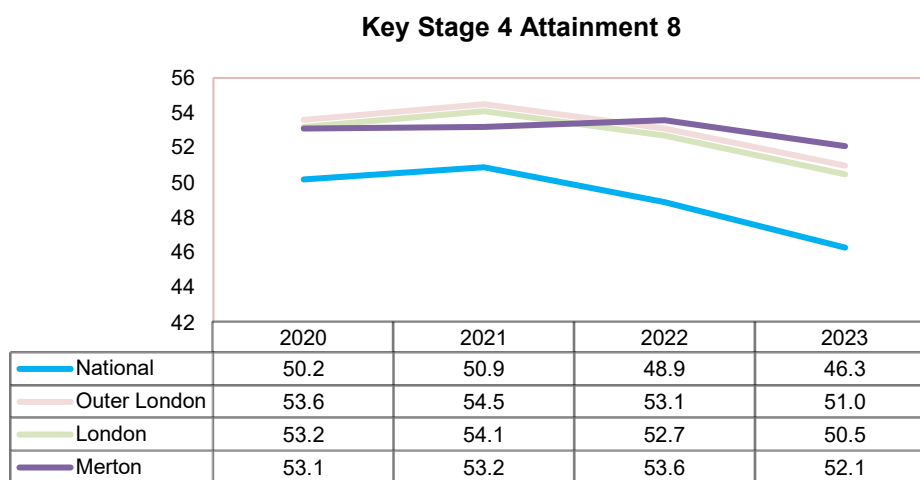
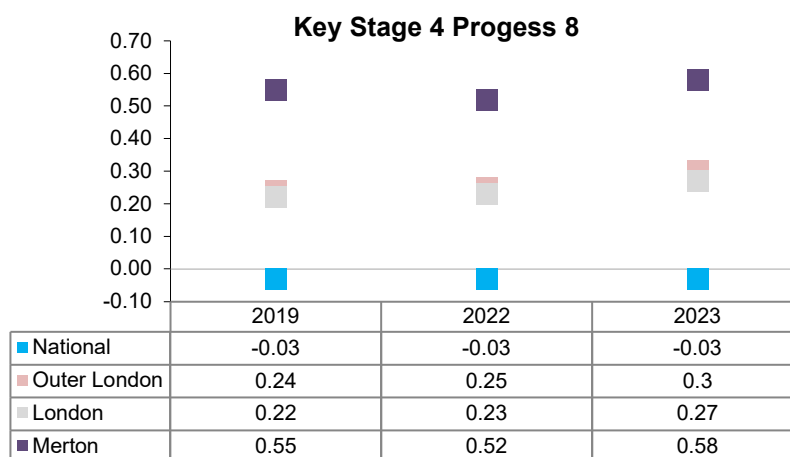
## Primary Phase Priorities for 2023/24

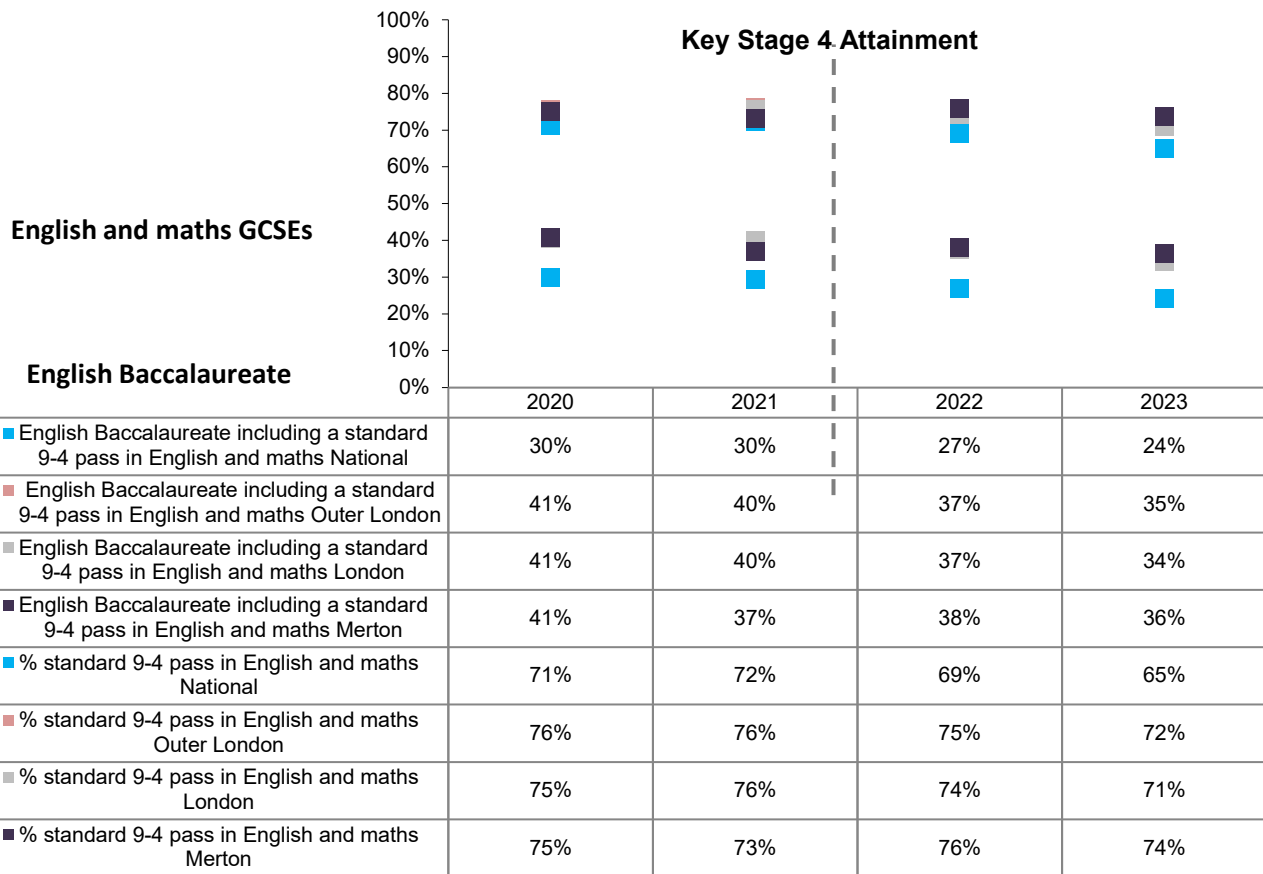
- a) Continue to support schools to improve outcomes in writing, particularly for pupils with SEND, and ensure that expectations of writing standards are as high within the wider curriculum, as in English lessons.
- b) Provide support for schools in establishing benchmarks in order to track attainment in writing in yr 2 & 4, given that year 2 SATs have been removed.
- c) Continued work on oracy, improving pupils' skills in using talk to learn across the curriculum (EYFS- KS2). Developing further materials to support oracy practice for EYFS, KS3 and for pupils with SEND.
- d) Explore strategies to promote reading fluency at KS3 and within specialist provisions.
- e) Improve experiences and outcomes for pupils with SEND by embedding 'Ordinarily Available Guidance' and ensuring pupils have consistency of access to the curriculum
- f) Continue to support schools to continue to embed a mastery approach to the teaching of mathematics which is inclusive of SEND pupils
- g) Improve attainment in maths of all pupils so that Merton's attainment at EXS+ is in-line or greater than in 2022.

## Key Stage 4: performance information and analysis

3.5.1 Post pandemic, assessment at Key Stage 4 (KS4) in 2022 moved closer to the pre-pandemic structure, but was not yet fully aligned. 2023 was the first time that structures are the same as those in 2019 and so comparison of outcomes needs to be undertaken cautiously. For the year 11 students who undertook their GCSEs this year, a significant proportion of their Key Stage 4 had been disrupted by the pandemic.

### KS4 - headline performance information and analysis – Updated entire KS4





3.5.2 Performance in Merton secondary schools at KS4 remains strong.

3.5.3 At 0.58, the Progress 8 score in Merton is well above national and London averages and improving on 2022 and ranks the Borough 5<sup>th</sup> in the country – such strong performance has been consistent in Merton since the introduction of this indicator nationally.

3.5.4 In the Attainment 8 indicator, Merton’s average (52.1) is above the national and the London averages and ranks Merton 15<sup>th</sup> nationally.

3.5.5 The proportion of pupils achieving grades 9-4 in the EBacc subjects, including English and maths is above the London average, and 11 percentage points above the national average. This is one indication of the breadth of curriculum being offered in Merton schools at KS4.

3.5.6 The proportion of students achieving a standard 9-4 pass in English and mathematics has improved by 3 percentage points, ranking Merton 14<sup>th</sup> nationally.

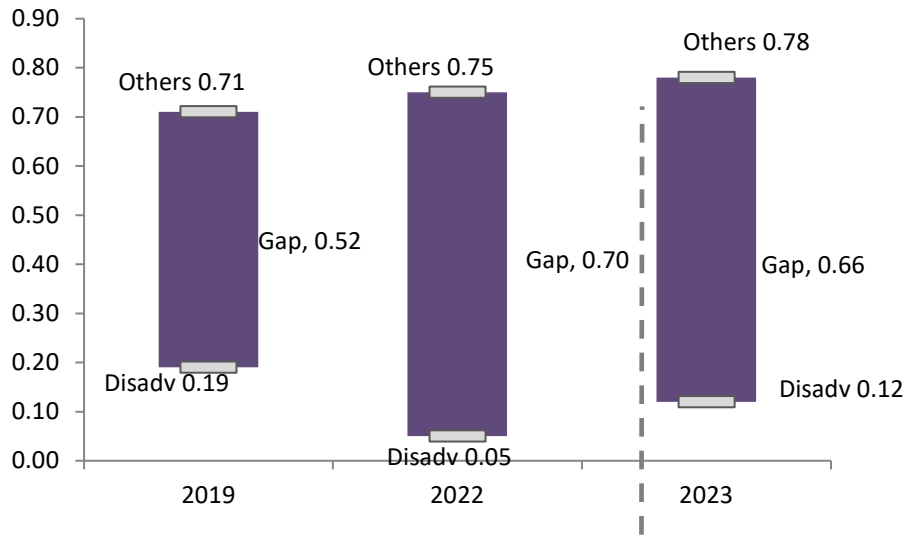


## KS4 - main pupil groups and analysis -

### Key Stage 4 achievements by contextual groups:

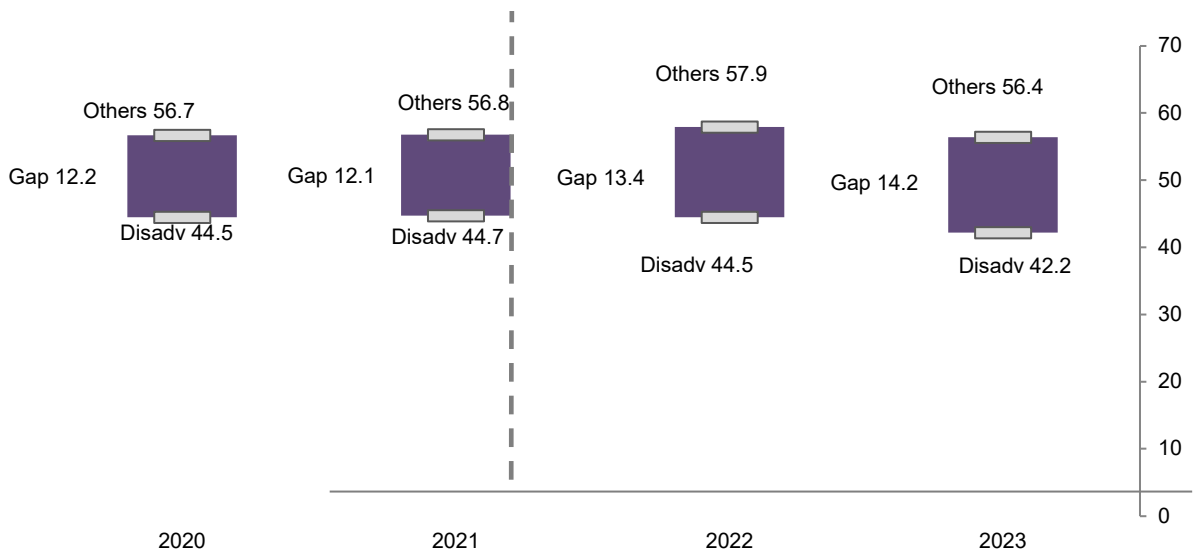
Contextual Groups	Number of Pupils	Progress 8 score (2023)			Attainment 8 score			% achieving the English Baccalaureate (including a standard 9-4 pass in English and maths)			% achieving a standard 9-4 pass in English and maths GCSEs		
		Merton	London	National	Merton	London	National	Merton	London	National	Merton	London	National
All Pupils	1711	0.58	0.27	-0.03	52.1	50.5	46.3	36%	34%	24%	74%	71%	65%
<b>Gender</b>													
Female	791	0.66	0.41	0.12	53.6	52.8	48.6	39%	39%	28%	76%	73%	68%
Male	920	0.52	0.14	-0.17	50.7	48.3	44.1	34%	30%	20%	72%	69%	63%
Gap		0.14	0.27	0.29	2.9	4.5	4.5	5%	9%	8%	4%	4%	5%
<b>Disadvantaged</b>													
Disadvantaged	522	0.12	-0.13	-0.57	42.2	41.9	35.1	22%	22%	12%	55%	56%	43%
All other pupils	1189	0.78	0.46	0.17	56.4	54.5	50.3	43%	40%	29%	82%	78%	73%
Gap		0.66	0.59	0.74	14.2	12.6	15.2	21%	18%	17%	27%	22%	29%
<b>Special Educational Needs (SEN)</b>													
No Special Educational Needs	1310	0.74	0.41	0.10	57.3	54.4	50.1	44%	39%	28%	84%	78%	72%
SEN Support	289	0.15	-0.18	-0.45	40.1	38.1	33.2	14%	13%	8%	45%	46%	37%
SEN (with Statement or EHC plan)	112	-0.37	-0.85	-1.12	22.0	16.3	14.0	6%	4%	2%	24%	16%	13%
<b>Ethnic Group</b>													
ASIAN	311	0.99	0.67	0.53	57.6	56.5	53.4	39%	42%	35%	85%	80%	75%
BLACK	344	0.45	0.15	0.22	46.5	46.4	46.7	23%	26%	25%	61%	65%	65%
MIXED	210	0.23	0.04	-0.04	47.9	49.3	46.8	27%	32%	26%	66%	68%	65%
WHITE	762	0.56	0.14	-0.14	53.3	49.8	45.1	44%	35%	22%	76%	70%	64%

### Closing the gap: Disadvantaged Progress 8



### Closing the gap: Disadvantaged

#### Attainment 8



3.5.7 Progress 8 scores show that all groups in Merton continued to outperform the same groups nationally and in London. Students with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are the only group with negative progress between Key Stage 2 and 4, although their performance is better than the same group nationally and the gap between them and other students is a narrower gap than in London and nationally.

- 3.5.8 The gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers has widened slightly in the Progress 8 indicator but both Attainment 8 and Progress 8 are more positive picture that is seen nationally. Girls outperform boys in all indicators although the gaps are narrower than those seen nationally.
- 3.5.9 The performance of black students, and those deemed of mixed heritage, is notably not as strong as other students in Merton. Progress is above that of similar groups across the country but attainment for a 4-9 pass in English and Maths, which contributes to the EBacc standard is variable. Closing that gap remains a priority for the Local Authority.

## 16 -18: performance information and analysis

3.6.1 Performance measures in the 16-18 phase are split by the type of qualifications students are studying for into:

- A level – only A level outcomes.
- Academic - A levels and a range of other academic qualifications taken at level 3, including AS levels, the International Baccalaureate, Applied A levels, Pre-U, Free-standing mathematics qualifications and the extended project.
- Tech level - defined by the DfE as ‘rigorous level 3 qualifications for post-16 students wishing to specialise in a specific industry or occupation and that develop specialist knowledge and skills to enable entry to employment or progression to a related higher education course.’
- Applied general - defined by the DfE as ‘rigorous level 3 qualifications for post-16 students who wish to continue their education through applied learning and that equip students with transferable knowledge and skills.’

### Post 16 - headline performance information

State funded school students	Number of students	Average Point Score per entry			Average Point Score per entry as a grade		
		Merton	London	National	Merton	London	National
A level students	630	34.45	34.86	34.05	C+	C+	C+
Academic students	639	34.51	34.93	34.15	C+	C+	C+
Tech level students	75	35.91	29.01	28.49	Dist	Merit+	Merit+
Applied General students	278	31.74	28.59	29.51	Dist-	Merit+	Merit+

A level students	APS per entry, best 3	Percentage of students achieving 3 A*-A grades or better at A level	Percentage of students achieving grades AAB or better at A level	Percentage of students achieving grades AAB or better at A level, of which at least two are in facilitating subjects
Merton	34.97	10.0	19.5	14.3
London	35.11	14.7	23.7	17.5
National	34.55	13.3	22.0	15.6

3.6.2 Average Point Score (APS) per entry scores are above the national averages for all qualification types.

3.6.3 However, whilst being above London averages for Tech Level and Applied General qualifications, outcomes for A level and Academic qualifications are just below. Merton’s ranking in comparison with other LAs for Applied General qualifications maintained the significant improvement seen in 2022 (from 58<sup>th</sup> to 32<sup>nd</sup>), and the average grade is Distinction, as it is also for Tech Level qualifications.

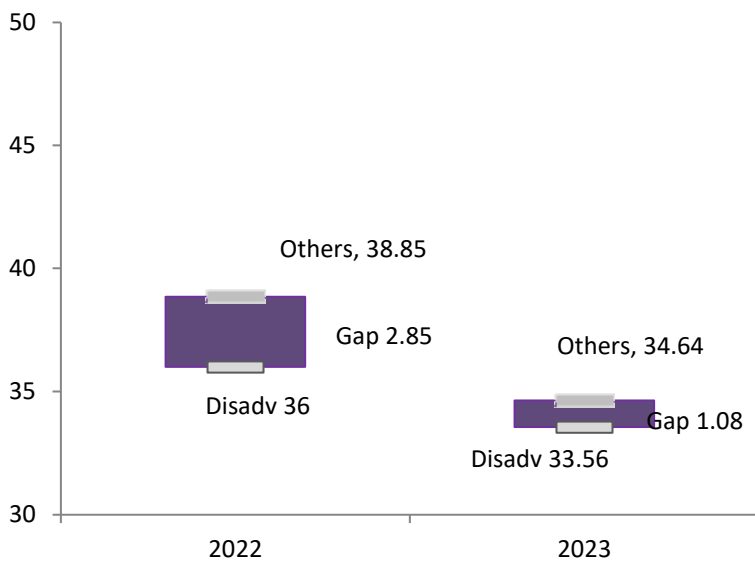
3.6.4 At the higher grades in A Level (A\*-C), Merton outcomes are similar to the borough's 2019 (pre-Covid) outcomes, and two percentage points higher than the provisional 2023 national average and 1.7 percentage points above the 2019 national average.

3.6.5 At grades A\*-B, 2023 Merton outcomes are broadly in line with Merton outcomes in 2019. However, A\*-B outcomes are 2.5% below the 2023 national average, and 0.8% below the 2019 national average, and 10% of students achieve three A\*-A grades or better at A level, compared to the national average of 13%. Improving performance at the higher grades continues to be a priority for all schools in Merton.

### Post 16 main pupil groups

Contextual Groups	Number of A level students	Average Point Score per A level entry		
		Merton	London	National
All Pupils	630	34.45	34.86	34.05
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	298	35.18	35.19	35.70
Male	332	33.80	34.45	34.53
Gap		1.38	0.74	1.18
<b>Disadvantaged</b>				
Disadvantaged	122	33.56	31.18	29.82
Non-Disadvantaged	501	34.64	35.96	34.70
Gap		-1.08	-4.78	-4.89
<b>SEN Provision</b>				
No Special Educational Needs	554	34.60	34.97	34.16
SEN Support	56	32.70	32.48	32.00
SEN (with Statement or EHC plan)	6	26.40	32.66	32.24
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
Asian or Asian British	137	30.17	34.74	33.43
Black or Black British	103	33.62	31.20	30.57
Chinese	4	40.83	39.93	39.73
Mixed background	58	31.89	35.16	34.31
White	285	36.69	36.83	34.49

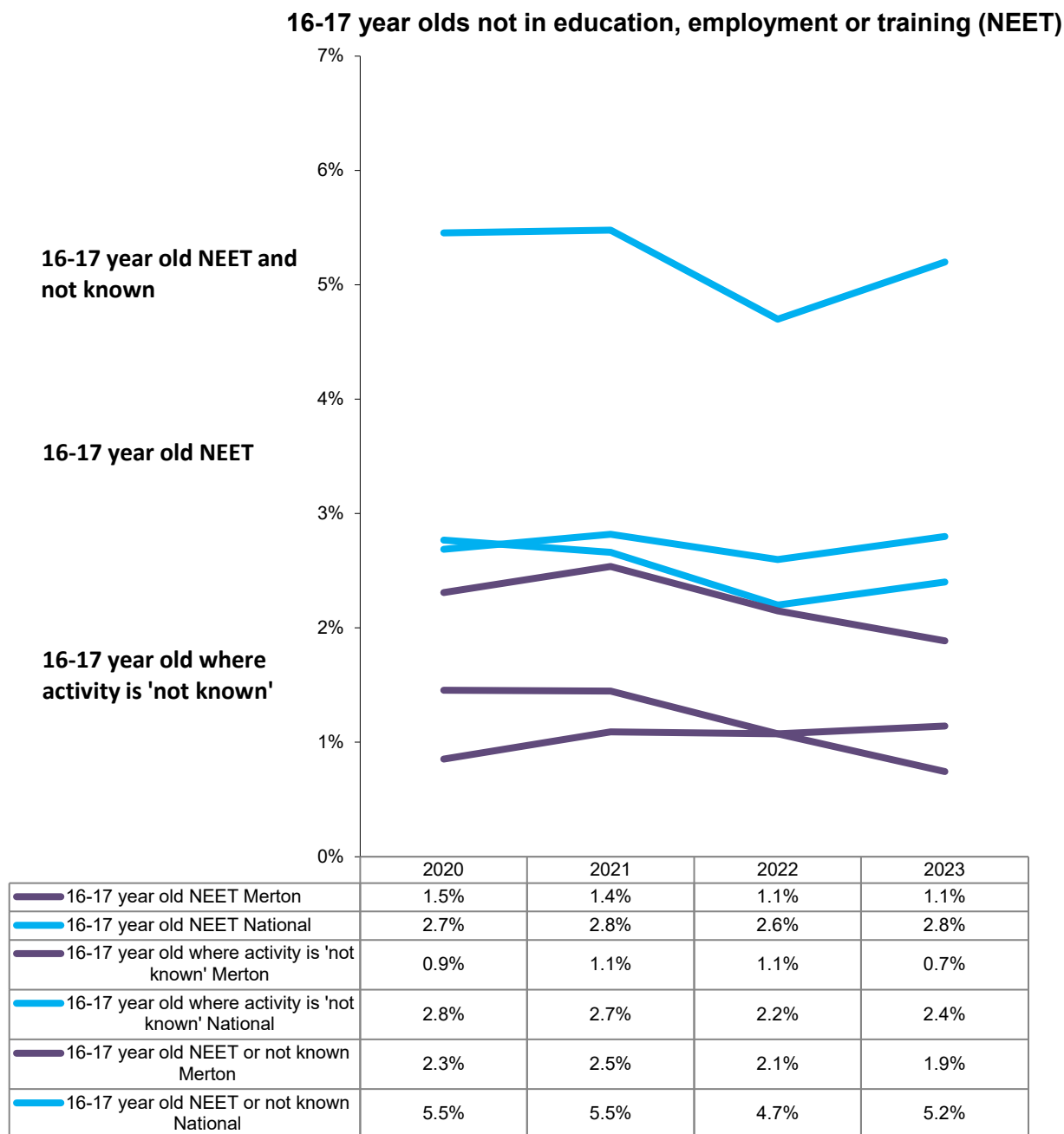
### Closing the gap: Average Point Score per A level entry



- 3.6.6 Girls continue to outperform boys, and the Merton gap for average point score per A level entry remains marginally wider than that seen in London and nationally.
- 3.6.7 The gap between disadvantaged students and their peers has narrowed this year and is remains narrower than the gap seen nationally and in London. This is a three-year trend.
- 3.6.8 Students in receipt of SEND support perform a little better than their peers nationally and in London, but those with EHCPs do not perform as well. This is in the context of there being only six children in the cohort.
- 3.6.9 Black or Black British students and Chinese students achieved better than their peers nationally.

## Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET)

3.7.1 The headline indicator for the NEET measure includes the combined figure for NEET and not known (therefore including the young people whose current education, employment or training status is not known).

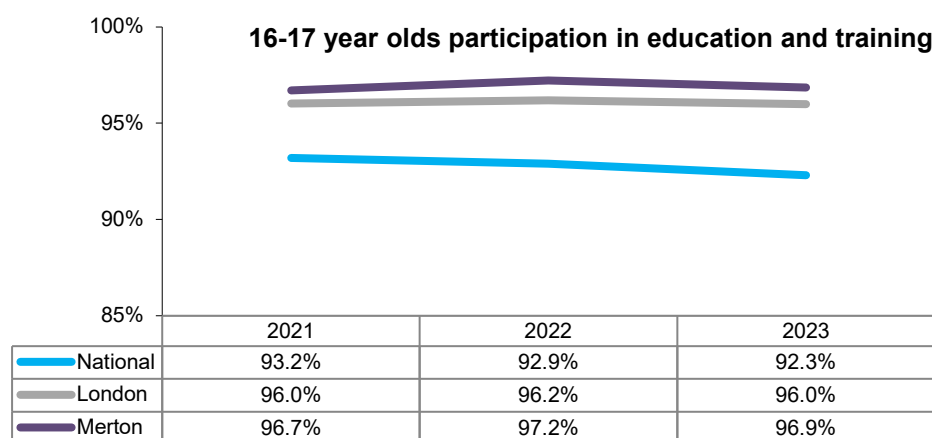


3.7.2 The proportions of young people who are Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET) and whose status is not known, have again fallen and are significantly better than national and London averages. Performance in all three indicators continues to place Merton in the top quintile of performance nationally. Merton has now maintained its 5<sup>th</sup> best performance in England for the second year running. This has been achieved as a result of significant and robust tracking and partnership working across schools, colleges and CLLF teams. These low levels have been maintained for over four

years. We know from current tracking that NEET figures are rising nationally as more young people are struggling to cope in post 16 education, or engage in seeking post 16 education, after the pandemic. This mirrors the pre-16 school attendance issues. We expect that this four-year improvement up to 2023 to decline in 2024 as more young people are becoming NEET.

3.7.3 Our key focus remains to reduce the proportion of NEET within the following groups: those with SEND; care experienced young people and those who are open to the youth offending service or previously known to that team. Merton’s current proportion of vulnerable pupils as a proportion of the total NEET population is lower than national and London.

## Raising the Participation Age (RPA)



Contextual Groups	2021			2022			2023		
	Merton	London	National	Merton	London	National	Merton	London	National
16-17 year olds - participating in education and training	<b>96.7%</b>	96.0%	93.2%	<b>97.2%</b>	96.2%	92.9%	<b>96.9%</b>	96.0%	92.3%
- in full time education	<b>93.8%</b>	93.4%	87.4%	<b>94.4%</b>	93.5%	86.6%	<b>94.7%</b>	93.3%	85.7%
- in apprenticeships	<b>1.3%</b>	1.4%	3.8%	<b>1.7%</b>	1.7%	4.4%	<b>1.6%</b>	1.7%	4.7%
- other education and training	<b>1.6%</b>	1.2%	2.0%	<b>1.1%</b>	1.0%	1.9%	<b>0.5%</b>	1.0%	1.9%



- 3.7.4 This year the proportion of 16 – 17 year olds participating in education and training has fallen by 0.3 percentage points; however, Merton’s performance is in the first quintile (best performance) in comparison with other Local Authorities in England.
- 3.7.5 The proportion of 16-17 year olds participating in full time education is higher than the London and national averages, with a significant rise of 0.3 percentage points since last year. This continues a rising four-year trend.
- 3.7.6 The proportions in apprenticeships, or other education and training is consequently lower. Proportions in apprenticeships are lower in areas where education and training are higher; however, it is in line with London averages. We have seen a fall in work with training where young people are getting jobs as work is available but there is no training attached.

## Apprenticeship Participation

Figure under date refers to number of 16 and 17 year olds academic age	Apprenticeship Participation								
	2023	Rank	2022	Rank	2021	Rank	2020	Rank	% change in year 2022 to 2023
National	4.7%		4.4%		3.8%		5.1%		0.3%
<b>Merton</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>-0.1%</b>
Barnet	1.3%	7	1.3%	8	0.9%	8	1.4%	11	0.1%
Ealing	1.1%	8	1.2%	9	0.8%	9	1.2%	10	-0.1%
Enfield	1.0%	9	1.5%	7	1.5%	5	2.3%	8	-0.5%
Hillingdon	2.4%	3	2.8%	3	2.4%	3	2.6%	3	-0.5%
Hounslow	1.6%	5	1.5%	6	0.7%	11	1.8%	9	0.1%
Kingston upon Thames	1.5%	6	1.7%	4	1.7%	4	2.6%	4	-0.2%
Reading	3.9%	1	3.5%	1	2.5%	2	3.8%	2	0.4%
Redbridge	1.0%	10	1.0%	11	0.9%	7	1.6%	5	0.0%
Sutton	2.9%	2	3.2%	2	2.6%	1	4.2%	1	-0.3%
Wandsworth	0.9%	11	1.0%	10	0.7%	10	1.3%	7	-0.1%

- 3.7.7 When comparing the apprenticeship participation rates in Merton to those in the previous year, Merton has seen a slight fall in 16-17 year olds participating in apprenticeships in line with the majority of statistical neighbour local authorities.
- 3.7.8 2023 performance ranks Merton 4th in comparison with its 10 statistical neighbours.

3.7.9 As noted above, apprenticeships are low due to high education participation in the 16/17-year-old group. Apprenticeships are taken up after the age of 17 notably as a result of the work undertaken with some young people by Merton's own employability scheme ('My Futures').

## 2022/23 Secondary phase priorities, impact and key actions taken

### 3.8.1

**Priority:**

Ensure all Merton secondary schools remain good or outstanding.

**Actions taken to secure impact:**

Continued support through the MEP programme. This includes ongoing reviews of the key Ofsted judgments, including the sixth form.

Bespoke support has been provided to senior and middle leaders. This has included support for HT and preparing for the focused inspection conversation, and for heads of department and preparing for inspection activities (deep dive). In addition, support has also been provided to governors, for example, workshops on their strategic role, and questions they may be asked during an inspection.

An Ofsted update is a standing item at termly secondary meetings (deputy heads and heads of sixth form and careers leads). This enables that key leaders are aware of any changes to the current inspection framework/practices and use this information to ensure schools have a successful Ofsted inspection outcome.

**Impact:**

All secondary schools remain good or outstanding.

### 3.8.2

**Priority:**

Support pupils in Y7 who have not met the standard for reading at the end of KS2, building on the primary phase fluency projects, ensuring these strategies for developing reading fluency are used by teachers across the curriculum not just in English lessons.

**Actions taken to secure impact:**

- Autumn – Spring 2022/3 five schools participated in KS3 reading fluency project.
- Merton fluency specialists expertise extended and developed to include KS3 practice.

**Impact:**

- Implementation challenging but where fidelity to the project was maintained, progress was significant (average of 5 years progress in reading comprehension in 8 weeks).
- Work is ongoing with Perseid who have developed their practice to meet the needs of individual pupils.

### 3.8.3

**Priority:** Sustain the focus on improving outcomes for the most able pupils post 16 so that the proportions achieving the higher A level outcomes continue to improve.

**Actions taken to secure impact:**

- Termly meetings for secondary deputy heads and heads of sixth form to analyse data, share strategies on raising achievement.
- Sixth form reviews led by MEP inspectors and a focus on raising attainment at A level.
- Staff training (March 2023) delivered by a London Sixth Form College on improving outcomes at the higher grades at A level.
- MEP Inspector professional dialogue with senior school leaders as part of MEP programme.

**Impact:**

- At grades A\*-C, Merton outcomes are similar to the borough's 2019 (pre-Covid) outcomes, and 2 percentage points higher than the provisional 2023 national average and 1.7 percentage points above the 2019 NA.
- The average point score at A level is 34.5, compared to the NA of 34.
- At grades A\*-B, 2023 Merton outcomes are broadly in line with Merton outcomes in 2019. A\*-B outcomes are 2.5% below the 2023 NA, and 0.8% below the 2019 NA.
- 10% of students achieve three A\*-A grades or better at A level, compared to the NA of 13%.

This continues to be a priority for all schools in Merton.

## 3.8.4

**Priority:** Narrow the gaps for key groups at KS4: disadvantaged pupils, pupils in receipt of SEN support and Black pupils and those of mixed heritage.

**Actions taken to secure impact:**

- Achievement of pupil groups is a key area of focus at MEP visits.
- LA Ordinarily Available Guidance (SEND) has been delivered to staff.
- Training on supporting disadvantaged pupils delivered to governors.
- Training for Pupil Premium Leads sharing effective practice, drawing on Education Endowment Foundation research and local practice.
- Up-skilling Pupil Premium Leads and providing updates and briefings in schools in relation to provision

**Impact:**

With regard to the proportion of pupils with Grade 4+ in GCSE English and maths, Overall Attainment 8 score, and the Progress 8 Score:

- Disadvantaged pupils in Merton significantly outperformed the same group nationally; the gap between them and their peers has widened slightly but is lower than the gap seen nationally.
- Pupils in receipt of SEN support significantly outperformed the same group nationally.
- The performance of black students, and those deemed of mixed heritage, is notably not as strong as other students in Merton. Progress is above that of similar groups across the country but attainment for a 4-9 pass in English and Maths, which contributes to the EBacc standard is variable. Closing that gap remains a priority for the Local Authority.
- Pupils of mixed heritage outperform the same group nationally.

## 3.8.5

**Priority:** Focus on SEND NEET post 16 and set up a SEND employability forum.

**Actions taken to secure impact:**

- SEND employability forum established.
- Work of My Futures continued to support NEET young people with a range of needs.

**Impact:**

- Support for SEND young people mapped and a leaflet describing that support was co-produced with young people at Cricket Green and distributed widely.
- Work undertaken to establish how Merton will develop more supported internships to build on the success of Project Search. Work with Scrutiny and CMT to chart the direction of travel.

## Secondary Phase Priorities for 2023/24

- h) Ensure all Merton secondary schools remain good or outstanding.
- i) Sustain the focus on improving outcomes for the most able pupils in school sixth forms, so that the proportions achieving higher A level outcomes improve.
- j) Ensure that schools continue to develop a broad and inclusive curriculum, which meets the needs of all pupils, particularly pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils.
- k) To work closely with providers, in order to develop the breadth of quality assured vocational KS4 alternative provision, and ensure all pupils have a greater awareness of apprenticeship and technical education post-16 pathways.
- l) To develop the breadth of quality assured on-site KS4 alternative provision.
- m) To support schools in enabling students have a greater awareness of apprenticeship and technical education post-16 pathways.
- n) To set up a process to establish a supported internship model in the council to expands the offer to more young people with SEND.

# 4. Achievement of Pupils in the Virtual School

## Context

4.1.1 The achievement of children aged from age two to sixteen who are looked after by the Local Authority is tracked very regularly through the statutory process of the development and termly review of their Personal Education Plans (PEPs). In addition, for children of school age, the Virtual School collects an update on children’s progress and attainment at the end of each term for analysis and any necessary subsequent actions. Additional reports and assessments are reviewed in PEP Meetings and attached to the online PEP file as appropriate.

4.1.2 The Department for Education (DfE) collects information on the educational outcomes of looked after children in Annex A of the SSDA903 return. This information is collected annually for children who have been continuously looked after for at least 12 months on 31st March. This definition is used because 12 months is considered an appropriate length of time to gauge the possible impact of being looked after on educational attainment.

4.1.3 In March 2023 there were 78 children of statutory school age. There were also 52 young people over the age of 16 (not of statutory school age) most of whom turned 18 and left care at some point during the academic year. This is an increase of two school age children and decrease of 12 young people over the age of 16 in comparison with the previous year.

### 4.1.4 Unaccompanied Minors

Included within the roll of the Virtual School, at the end of the summer term there were 10 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) of statutory school age, in Year 8 and above. There were also 24 UASC in Years 12 and 13. This represents 11.63% and 43.64% respectively of the reported cohorts outlined above.

UASC Statutory School Aged Summer 2023			UASC Post 16 Summer 2023		
Year Groups	Total number	%	Year Groups	Total number	% Yr 12 & 13 (inc. CL)
Year 8	1	1.16%	Year 12	16	29.09%
Year 9	1	1.16%	Year 13	1	1.82%
Year 10	1	1.16%	Year 13 (CL)	7	12.73%
Year 11	7	8.14%	Total	24	43.64%
Total	10	11.63%			

4.1.5 The Virtual School ensures that every UASC registered in care to Merton receives a swift and efficient service to be placed in education, according to the individual’s needs. School age children are placed in schools or colleges with specialist ESOL programmes. Young people post 16 are placed in college and are supported through additional tuition for support for language development as required.

#### 4.1.6 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) 2023

School age children with SEN at end of Summer Term 2023	With an EHCP	% of Total School Age (84) with EHCP	SEN Support	% of Total School Age (84) with SEN Support	Total number of SEN (EHCP + SEN Support)	% Total School Age (84) with SEN
Primary	6	7.14%	6	7.14%	12	14.29%
Secondary	23	27.38%	15	17.86%	38	45.24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>34.52%</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>25.00%</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>59.52%</b>

School age children with SEN at end of Summer Term 2023	With an EHCP	% by Total Primary/Secondary with EHCP	SEN Support	% by Primary/Secondary with SEN Support	Total number of SEN (EHCP + SEN Support)	% of Total Primary/Secondary with SEN
Primary (22)	6	27.27%	6	27.27%	12	54.55%
Secondary (62)	23	37.10%	15	24.19%	38	61.29%

4.1.7 The proportion of pupils in care with any special educational need is 59.52 %. However, this represents a small drop in comparison with the previous year, when the rate was 62.82%.

## Outcomes

4.2.1 Results and comparative data for 2023 Looked After Children Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 are due to be published by the DfE in March 2024. The Virtual School collects data from schools in advance of this. It is this data which is included in the information below. Therefore the results below remain provisional.

4.2.2 Outcomes for cohorts of fewer than five pupils are suppressed to protect anonymity. **The small numbers of pupils represented in each key stage means that comparisons by percentage of local with national data, must be interpreted with caution.**

#### 4.2.3 EYFSP outcomes

EYFSP Good Level of Development (GLD)	2019		2022		2023	
	Percentage GLD	No. of Children	Percentage GLD	No. of Children	Percentage GLD	No. of Children
Merton Looked After Children	0%	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Merton 903 Children	0%	<5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Merton All Children	75.5%		69%		69.1%	
National All Children	71.8%		65.2%		67.2%	

- There were no Merton children in care (SSDA903) at the Early Years Foundation Stage assessment point (2023).

#### 4.2.4 Year 1 Phonics Screening Check outcomes

Phonics Screening Check (Year 1)	2019		2022		2023	
	% achieving standard	No. of Children	% achieving standard	No. of Children	% achieving standard	No. of Children
Merton Looked After Children	40%	5	100%	<5	N/A	N/A
Merton 903 Children	50%	<5	100%	<5	N/A	N/A
Merton All Children	83%		80%		83%	
National All Children	82%		75%		79%	

- There were no children in care at the assessment point, Year 1 2023.
- Of the child(ren) in care in Year 2, none were required to retake the phonics screening check.

#### 4.2.5 End of KS2 Outcomes

There were six children in care (SSDA903) at the end of Key Stage 2. Two of the six children had an EHCP. As noted above there is no published data yet available for this cohort. We have data for five of the six children.

#### 4.2.6 KS2 READING

Key Stage 2 READING	2019				2022				2023			
	EXS+	High Score	Progress	No	EXS+	High Score	Progress	No	EXS+	High Score	Progress	No
Merton Looked After Children	30%	0%	-2.27	10	66.7%	16.7%	4.72	6	40%	0%	3.97	6
Merton 903 Children	50%	0%	-1.67	7	66.7%	16.7%	4.72	6	40%	0%	3.97	6
Merton All Children	79%	32%	1.47		80%	33%	0.7		79%	37%	1.0	
National Looked After Children	NYA		NYA		52%				NYA		NYA	
National All Children	73%	27%	0		75%	28%			73%	29%		

- The progress score range was -4.78 to +32.35, giving a mean average score of +3.97.
- 40% achieved the expected standard or above in Reading.

#### 4.2.7 KS2 WRITING

Key Stage 2 WRITING	2019				2022				2023			
	EXS+	GDS	Progress	No	EXS+	GDS	Progress	No	EXS+	GDS	Progress	No
Merton Looked After Children	40%	0%	-1.4	10	66.7%	16.7%	+6	6	20%	0%	4.44	6
Merton 903 Children	67%	0%	-0.47	7	66.7%	16.7%	+6	6	20%	0%	4.44	6
Merton All Children	80%	22%	-0.68		70%	18%	0.3		73%	16%	0	
National Looked After Children	NYA		NYA		43%				NYA		NYA	
National All Children	78%	20%	0		70%	13%			72%	13%		

- 20% achieved the expected standard in writing.
- The progress score range was -11.02 to +30.73, giving a mean average score of +4.44.

#### 4.2.8 KS2 MATHEMATICS

Key Stage 2 MATHEMATICS	2019				2022				2023			
	EXS+	High Score	Progress	No.	EXS+	High Score	Progress	No.	EXS+	High Score	Progress	No.
Merton Looked After Children	40%	0%	-0.2	10	66.7%	0%	3.23	6	40%	20%	5.72	6



<b>Merton 903 Children</b>	50%	0%	-0.08	7	66.7%	0%	3.23	6	40%	20%	5.72	6
<b>Merton All Children</b>	83%	35%	1.56		79%	33%	1.5		80%	33%	1.7	
<b>National Looked After Children</b>	NYA		NYA		45%				NYA		NYA	
<b>National All</b>	79%	27%	0		72%	23%			3%	24%		

- 40% achieved at least the expected standard in maths, and 30% achieved the high score standard.
- The progress score range was +1.95 to +36.87, giving a mean average score of +5.72.

#### 4.2.9 **KS2 GRAMMAR, PUNCTUATION AND SPELLING (GPS)**

20% achieved the standard.

#### 4.2.10 **KS2 READING, WRITING AND MATHEMATICS COMBINED**

20% achieved the standard.

#### 4.2.11 **End of KS4 Outcomes (GCSE)**

In addition to the GCSE results noted below, our children in care also achieve other qualifications according to their individual goals. For example, young people who arrive as Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children achieved qualifications in ESOL and in entry level qualifications.

#### 4.2.12

<b>Year 11 Results 2023</b>	<b>Did not sit GCSEs</b>	<b>5 GCSEs 4 - 9 (any subject)</b>	<b>% of total pupils 5 GCSEs 4-9 (any subject)</b>	<b>5 GCSEs 4 - 9 inc English and Maths</b>	<b>% of total pupils 5 GCSEs 4 - 9 inc English and Maths</b>	<b>English and Maths Grade 1 - 9</b>	<b>% of total pupils English and Maths Grade 1 - 9</b>
Number of all CIC Year 11 = 26	3	6	23.08%	6	23.08%	6	23.08%
Number of 903 Year 11 = 17	2	5	19.23%	5	19.23%	12	46.15%

- There were 17 young people in total in this cohort.
- 6 of the 17 young people (35.29%) had an EHCP, and four were in receipt of SEN support. None of the young people achieving Grades 4 – 9 had additional SEN. However 3 young people with EHCPs made good progress.
- 15 of the 17 young people sat GCSE examinations.
- Of the 15 young people who sat GCSEs, five achieved 5+ Grades 4 to 9 including English and Maths (19.23%)
- Of the 15 young people, five achieved 5+ GCSEs Grades 4 to 9 in any subject.
- Individual successes are noted below:
  - **Young Person A** made overall progress of +0.87.
  - **Young Person B** achieved 9 GCSEs at Grade 5 and above: Grade 8 in Maths; Grade 7 in Physics; Grade 6 in English Language and English Literature; Grade 6 in Biology, Chemistry and Geography; Grade 5 in German and History and Distinction in BTech Sport.

- **Young Person C** achieved Grade 7 in English Literature and Grade 6 in Maths and Additional Science and made overall progress of +0.83.
- **Young Person D** achieved Grade 8 in RS; Grade 6 in English Language and Literature, Maths and PE; Grade 5 in Spanish, Biology, Chemistry and Distinction in BTEch Music.
- **Young Person E** with an EHCP made overall progress of +1.19 (+1.33 English, +1.19 Maths, +1.41 EBacc and +0.87 in other subjects.)
- **Young Person F** with an EHCP made overall progress of +1.37 (+1.10 English, +0.86 Maths, +0.27 EBacc and + 2.98 in other subjects.)
- **Young Person G** with an EHCP made overall progress of +0.82 (+1.10 English, +2.15 in other subjects.)

#### 4.2.13 Destinations Year 12 2022

All young people in Year 12 at the start of Autumn Term 2022 had a planned destination.

#### 4.2.14 Post 16 Outcomes

The Virtual School works in close partnership with the network of professionals to support children in care from the age of 16 to 18 years as per the statutory duty of the Virtual School Headteacher. The Virtual School continues to support with education and training, those young people who are entitled to a service from the local authority of 18 – 25 years. Additionally, the Virtual School supports young people aged 18 – 25 years who have more challenges in becoming EET, through the work of the Virtual School EET Support Worker.

4.2.15 By the end of year 13 young people have usually turned 18 and left care. It is often the case that the young person does not share their exam results with the Virtual School. Where possible, the Virtual School Advisory Teacher (Post 16) is able to gather the information about individuals for the purpose of supporting them further should they wish.

#### 4.2.16 Level 3 outcomes

Of the Year 13 students on Level 3 Courses, two achieved BTEC qualifications; one achieved a mix of Level 3 and Level 2 Qualifications, and one young person achieved a mix of T Levels and A Level Qualifications. One young person achieved A Levels.

#### 4.2.17 Year 12 and Year 13 in Education, Employment or Training (EET)

EET/NEET end of academic year 2022/2023	Total No. Young people	Number of EET	% of total per year group	% EET as total of all Post 16 (inc. CL)	College	School	Training	Employment	Tuition
Year 12	28	21	75.00%	38.18%	14	1	1	1	4
Year 13	0	0	0%	0.00%	0	0	0	0	0
Year 13 (CL)	27	21	77.78%	38.18%	12	6	2	1	0
	55								

- At the end of the academic year 75% of young people in Years 12 and 13 (including care leavers) were in Education, Employment or Training, with most engaging in college courses.

#### 4.2.18 18 to 25 Year Olds supported by the Virtual School into Education, Employment or Training (EET)

In the academic year 2022/2023 there were 20 young people who were being supported by the Virtual School into Education, Employment or Training who were between the ages of 18 and 25 years. The EET

Support Worker work directly with young people in addition to social workers, personal advisers, placement key workers, foster carers, parents and wider partners.

4.2.19 As at the end of September 2023 the status of these young people was as follows:

- 1 young person in college
- 6 young people in employment
- 3 young people on hold due to mental health issues, custody, hospital, moving placement, etc.
- 9 young people were still exploring different opportunities.
- 1 young person's case was closed to the Leaving Care Team by this time.

4.2.20 **Higher Education 2022/2023**

- There were 17 undergraduate students in higher education supported by the Virtual School.
- 1 post graduate student achieved a Master's Degree in International Management
- 3 young people achieved degrees in each of Animal Health, Dance and Psychology

4.2.21 **General Progress and Attainment**

Academic Progress updates for children and young people in education are provided by schools through PEP meetings and an overview is collected by Welfare Call and reported to the Virtual School at the start of each term to reflect the previous term. Attitude to Learning scores across four areas are also included which provide insight into each pupil's engagement in learning.

4.2.22 Virtual School Monitoring meetings take place on a weekly basis over the first half term of each term. Advisory Teachers and the Virtual School Headteacher analyse progress data to track individuals; subgroups such as year groups, key stages, EHCPs, schools, gender, ethnicity, etc. Relevant actions are assigned to the Advisory Teacher with targets for school to consider and address, as appropriate.

## Autumn 2022

% Making Expected Progress within Key Stage		Key Stage	ATL1	ATL2	ATL3	ATL4
KS1 - R, 1 and 2	0.00%	KS1 - R, 1 and 2	0%	0%	66.67%	0%
KS2 - Yr 3 to 6	75.00%	KS2 - Yr 3 to 6	0%	13%	50%	25%
KS3 - Yr 7 to 9	77.78%	KS3 - Yr 7 to 9	6%	11%	61%	11%
KS4 - Yr 10 to 11	67.65%	KS4 - Yr 10 to 11	6%	12%	35%	29%

## Spring 2023

% Making Expected Progress within Key Stage		Key Stage	ATL1	ATL2	ATL3	ATL4
KS1 - R, 1 and 2	75.00%	KS1 - R, 1 and 2	25.00%	25.00%	50.00%	0.00%
KS2 - Yr 3 to 6	75.00%	KS2 - Yr 3 to 6	12.50%	12.50%	50.00%	18.75%
KS3 - Yr 7 to 9	47.62%	KS3 - Yr 7 to 9	23.81%	19.05%	33.33%	9.52%
KS4 - Yr 10 to 11	65.79%	KS4 - Yr 10 to 11	13.16%	15.79%	42.11%	26.32%

## Summer 2023

% Making Expected Progress within Key Stage		Key Stage	ATL1	ATL2	ATL3	ATL4
KS1 - R, 1 and 2	85.71%	KS1 - R, 1 and 2	14.29%	14.29%	71.43%	0.00%
KS2 - Yr 3 to 6	81.25%	KS2 - Yr 3 to 6	6.25%	12.50%	50.00%	31.25%
KS3 - Yr 7 to 9	45.83%	KS3 - Yr 7 to 9	16.67%	37.50%	33.33%	8.33%
KS4 - Yr 10 to 11	65.79%	KS4 - Yr 10 to 11	10.53%	21.05%	31.58%	26.32%

### 4.2.23 Attendance

Cumulative Attendance	All CIC %	903 Cohort %
Primary Attendance	95.58	96.63
Secondary Attendance	85.45	87.30
Overall Attendance	88.31	90.10

- Attendance of pupils in the primary phase at 96% was similar to the previous year, and above the attendance rates for all pupils as noted in chapter 5 (both nationally and locally).
- Attendance of pupils in the secondary phase at 87.3% (for the 903 cohort) dropped slightly in comparison with the previous year, and is below the averages for all pupils in that phase, but is well above the latest published attendance rates for children in care nationally (77%).
- Where attendance rates were lower for young people the most common reasons were: new to care; long term hospital stay; refusing to engage in their education; history of low attendance prior to coming into care; illness and suspensions.

### 4.2.24 Exclusions and Suspensions

- There were no permanent exclusions of children in care to Merton during 2022/2023, as in previous years.

Suspensions (previously known as fixed term exclusions)	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
Number of pupils with first suspensions	1	6	1	7	2	14
Number of pupils with more than one suspension	1	7	0	5	1	7

## Actions undertaken by the Virtual School to secure outcomes

### 4.3.1 Quality of schools attended by Merton Looked After Children end of academic year 2022/2023

The Virtual School continues to monitor the quality of education provided by schools attended by children in care, and to place children in schools judged Good or Outstanding by Ofsted.

4.3.2 Where a child is already on roll of a school that Ofsted judges to Require Improvement or Inadequate when they come into care, or the school's rating becomes less than Good, the Virtual School Headteacher and Advisory Teacher study the Ofsted report and make direct contact with the school's Headteacher for discussion about the salient points. A recommendation to move the child's school will be made if the child's best interests are no longer potentially to be served by remaining in that school, including if they are not making academic progress.

4.3.3 Where it is deemed to be unsettling for the children to be moved when their schools are judged to Require Improvement or Inadequate, the Advisory Teacher monitors the situation closely and visits the school, including those out of borough and out of London, on more than one occasion.

4.3.4 Ofsted ratings of Early Years settings attended by children in care are also monitored by the Virtual School.

School Ofsted Ratings Number of Statutory CIC	Within Merton Borough Schools	% of total CIC	Primary	Secondary	Within Other London Borough Schools	% of total CIC	Primary	Secondary	Outside of London Borough Schools	% of total CIC	Primary	Secondary	Overall Total	Overall % of total CIC
Newly Registered (Academy)	2	2.38%	2	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	2	2.38%
Outstanding	13	15.48%	0	13	13	15.48%	6	7	1	1.19%	0	1	27	32.14%
Good	12	14.29%	4	8	20	23.81%	4	16	12	14.29%	6	6	44	52.38%
Requires Improvement	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	3	3.57%	0	3	3	3.57%
Inadequate	0	0.00%	0	0	2	2.38%	0	2	0	0.00%	0	0	2	2.38%
<b>Total of CIC</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>32.14%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>41.67%</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>19.05%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>92.86%</b>

### 4.3.5 Alternative Provision

When a child in care is waiting for a new school place (usually determined by placement moves), the Virtual School provides a package of tuition and or other alternative provision bespoke to the child's circumstances. Where the child has an EHCP this package is negotiated, agreed and funded by SEND. The Virtual School continues to monitor, engage and communicate with the network around the child.

4.3.6 Other alternative programmes are commissioned by Virtual School such as 1:1 tuition and/or mentoring. The Virtual School uses providers who have successfully met the Quality Assurance criteria set by Merton.

4.3.7 In the summer term 2022/2023, fewer than five child(ren) were in each of the following categories:

- educated in hospital due to mental health issues;
- on a full programme of 1:1 tuition/mentoring whilst waiting for a specialist school provision;
- on roll of pupil referral units outside Merton.

### 4.3.8 Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

All children in care must have a care plan, of which the Personal Education Plan (PEP) is an integral part. During the PEP process, the progress and achievement of looked after children is carefully tracked, and

where they are falling behind, schools are challenged to identify how they might be supported to make accelerated progress, including how the Pupil Premium Plus grant for looked after children might be best used to secure improved outcomes. The Merton PEP is an online version (an 'E-PEP'), commissioned from Welfare Call.

4.3.9 The Virtual School Advisory Teachers lead on the PEP meetings. Meetings for an Initial PEP (within 20 school days of coming into care) are arranged by the business support staff within the Virtual School for the child's network of professionals. In the first year PEPs are then held every three months, so that the Virtual School has oversight of the plan in the earliest of stages and the Advisory Teachers can take swift action as required. Thereafter PEP meetings are held each term, in accordance with the statutory guidance. These enable the Virtual School to check progress against the targets and actions laid out in the PEP.

4.3.10 Additional PEP meetings take place as necessary, for example when a child is transitioning between care and adoption/special guardianship, or when there is a foster placement or school move.

4.3.11 PEP meetings take place either online or face to face. Started as a result of the pandemic lockdowns, online meetings have proved successful, with often more attendance by the wide network of adults involved in a child in care's life, and also by children. The Advisory Teacher attends every PEP meeting and supports the Designated Teacher in the school attended by the child, the foster carer, the social worker and others, in between PEP meetings, to ensure that actions and targets are on track for completion.

4.3.12 During the academic year 2022/2023, 100% PEPs were completed on time, including both Initial PEPs and termly Review PEPs.

4.3.13 All school age PEPs were quality assured against robust criteria, which are applied consistently.

PEPS Quality Assured	Gold	%	Green	%	Amber	%	Red	%	Total	%
Autumn term 2022	4	5.71%	53	75.71%	12	17.14%	1	1.43%	70	100%
Spring term 2023	4	5.26%	53	69.74%	18	23.68%	1	1.32%	76	100%
Summer term 2023	2	2.38%	57	67.86%	24	28.57%	1	1.19%	84	100%

Gold (Outstanding); Green (Good); Amber (Requires Improvement) and Red (Inadequate)

#### 4.3.14 Pupil Premium Plus (PPS) Funding

The Pupil Premium Plus grant funded by the DfE for looked after children in Merton was £2345 in 2022/2023. The Virtual School Headteacher has responsibility for managing the funding and making best use of the grant to support the educational outcomes of children in care, from Reception to Year 11.

4.3.15 The funding is released only once a target has been agreed in the PEP meeting and is either sent to the school to cover their cost or the Virtual School pays directly for a service. This ensures accountability and there is an evidence trail of impact. All allocations of funding for school age children are logged on the PEP document.

- 4.3.16 The Advisory Teacher has delegated authority from the Virtual School Headteacher to approve funding within or outside of the PEP meetings to an agreed limit. This is to enable a swift response and to give the Advisory Teachers status within the network. Funding requests which are rather more substantial or for a more unusual purpose are required to have approval from the Virtual School Headteacher.
- 4.3.17 In 2022/2023, the PPP funding was used for a variety of interventions and programmes for individual children in care, including:
- Academic intervention programmes
  - Behavioral, emotional, mental health interventions
  - Additional 1:1 support
  - Learning Resources e.g. Letter Box
  - Out of school learning participation activities through 'Activities in Action'.
  - Technology – hardware/software
  - Specialist tuition/equipment e.g. music lessons
  - Subject tuition
  - Therapeutic Interventions e.g. play therapy, equine therapy
  - Temporary alternative programmes to prevent exclusion or whilst waiting for a school place
  - Rewards
  - Careers advice through 1:1 coaching
- 4.3.18 The impact of 'Activities in Action' funding is measured through feedback from foster carers and school staff as a formal part of the PEP meeting. This encourages carers and school staff to note the difference participation in activities has made to the child. In the summer term 2023, 60.71% of children of school age participated in an out of school activity, such as football, gym, athletics, music, performing arts, and academic achievement related activities such as tutoring and workshops. Other activities included horse riding, swimming and volunteering for refugees. This is an increase from last year.
- 4.3.19 All foster carers who provided feedback for the summer term activities outside of the school stated that the children who participate enjoy these activities. The main trend noticed by foster carers was that children appeared to be more relaxed, especially when it comes to social interactions. Their behaviour at home was more positive as well and they see the children being more confident.
- 4.3.20 Overall, the schools' feedback matched the foster carers' and in addition, for those children who were participating in activities that were more academically orientated, the school noticed their improvement in terms of achievement.
- 4.3.21 The Virtual School Headteacher retained around 15% of Pupil Premium Plus to commission broader services, e.g. Welfare Call for attendance tracking; Welfare Call for the management and access to E-PEP and its reporting capabilities; and Educational Psychology and Speech and Language services.
- 4.3.22 The grant was also used to fund requests for additional resources for exceptional need, for example a short spell of alternative provision; an additional TA to support in school for an interim period.
- 4.3.23 **Pupil Views**  
The Virtual School continues to seek to develop a relationship with all its pupils and students and encourages them to participate in their Personal Educational Planning meetings either by attending for some or all of the meeting or sharing their views by school staff beforehand.

4.3.24 The views of the child are part of the preparation for the PEP meeting and school staff are asked to have a one-to-one conversation with the child for this purpose. Sometimes the child does not wish to do so, and school staff will try again at another time. Those views are captured in the first section of the PEP document so that professionals know and understand those views in determining subsequent actions and targets. 81% of young people shared their views for this purpose, averaged across the academic year 2022/2023, and on average, 45% of young people attended their PEP meetings.

4.3.25 All young people, of primary, secondary or post 16 ages receive a young person version of their PEP document.

4.3.26 Examples of targets which reflect the child's view:

- Child A is still concerned about core subjects, particularly English, so additional support at school and tuition continues.
- Child B's contact with the mentor is being reinstated as per child's request.
- Child C has confidently articulated the issues that he's had with the tutor and a new action has been set to change the tutor after forthcoming exams.
- Child D is worried about his maths, so this is targeted. He requested some graphic novels, and these materials are part of his reading target.
- Child E has talked about how she feels she is underperforming but would like to take a break from tuition as there's a lot going on for her at present. Action set to cancel tuition for now and re-visit in discussion with her.

#### 4.3.27 **Previously Looked-After Children**

The Virtual School also has a role in the education of Previously Looked After Children, and an Advisory Teacher leads on providing support and guidance to all stakeholders.

4.3.28 The Virtual School supports the transition between care and adoption / Special Guardianship Order by providing continued funding for a limited amount of time for activities; in school support; one to one tuition etc. Requests for support and guidance during 2022/2023 came from headteachers and other school staff, social workers, parents and other Virtual Schools. In addition, there was one query from Adopt London South. Types of enquiries were as follows:

- Admission regulations advice
- Additional support available
- Exclusion rules
- Social Care status regards child in care and previously looked after
- PLAC PPP funding and how to draw down through Census
- SENDIS/EHCP
- Secondary school transition
- Possible permanent exclusion
- School applications

#### 4.3.29 **Extended Role of the Virtual School Headteacher**

From September 2021 the Virtual School Headteacher was given a wider responsibility by the DfE to be the strategic lead for the education of all children with a social worker (in other words those with a Child Protection or Child In Need Plan).



- 4.3.30 This additional role of the Virtual School Head does not require the Virtual School to provide direct intervention, help and support for individual children with a social worker or their families, rather to champion their education, and in particular their regular attendance at school (of particular importance post pandemic) and to ensure professionals working with these children are supported.
- 4.3.31 Merton Virtual School initially focused the work on understanding and knowing the cohort of young people on a Child in Need plan or Child Protection plan. A database was constructed capturing relevant information. This work was completed by the end of March 2022.
- 4.3.32 The Virtual School commissioned Welfare Call to track the attendance of children with a social worker. Tracking of attendance against Children’s Services data also enabled identification of children with no school place or those who do not attend at all.
- 4.3.33 The Virtual School commissioned additional Educational Psychology Service provision and Speech and Language provision to influence more precise and targeted assessment and support for children with a social worker who may have undiagnosed special educational needs.
- 4.3.34 Externally, Merton’s Virtual School partnered with National Association of Virtual School Heads (NAVSH) and through the Association, the Rees Charity Foundation who evaluated the pilot on behalf of the DfE.
- 4.3.35 Virtual School Attendance Surgeries were set up to bring together Social Workers and School leaders to discuss individual children of secondary age who have Persistent Absence. This model has been extended and developed further throughout 2022/2023 and has recently been praised by the DfE Attendance Advisor who expressed an interest in sharing with other local authorities as a model of good practice.
- 4.3.36 Examples of impact of children discussed at Virtual School Attendance Surgeries are:
- Child A – 91.38% to 100%
  - Child B – 80.72% to 94.74%
  - Child C – 85.5% to 100%
  - Child D – 87% to 91%
  - Child E – 80% to 100%
- 4.3.37 **Training**
- The Virtual School delivered a full programme of training to a range of stakeholders, including social workers, Designated Teachers, school governors and foster carers. This training covered a range of subject areas including:
- Virtual School Core Training
  - Supporting Y11’s into Post 16
  - Online Safety
  - Understanding speech and language needs of CYP
  - Supporting Primary reading
  - Attachment and Developmental Trauma
  - EPEP Training
  - The Governor’s role and responsibilities.

- 4.3.38 Training was delivered online, as participants indicated that this was the most convenient method of delivery. The training sessions used inclusive methods to ensure interactivity, including break out rooms, case study discussion, quizzes, and use the of app Mentimeter.
- 4.3.39 Links were developed with other professionals from partner organisations who then delivered training within their field of expertise. For e.g., School Improvement Team, Language and Learning Service. This ensured that the most up to date, useful and impactful training was delivered.

# 5. Inclusion

## Attendance performance information and analysis

5.1.1 There are two attendance indicators:

- Persistent Absence (PA): Pupils have been identified as persistent absentees if they miss 10% or more of their possible sessions.
- Attendance: Attendance is measured by the DfE both after four half terms and after six (i.e. a whole school year.) Six terms data is not available until March 2024

### Four half term headline data

5.1.2 Attendance is measured at various points in the school year. The data covering four half terms (up until Easter 2023) has been published, and national and local comparators exist for this data set. Ofsted use the four half term data to judge attendance when they are inspecting schools. In addition inspectors now use 'WONDE' data (live attendance data feed from schools to the DfE).

5.1.3 Rates of attendance in Merton have dropped post pandemic, as they have done nationally and internationally. Anxiety on the part of both children and their parents is affecting attendance levels, as is the change in work patterns and the changes in public health messaging. Attendance in Merton schools continues to be better than the national, London and outer London averages for attendance; performance is also better with regards to the rates of Persistent. This performance represents an improvement - last year Merton's performance was better than the national average but not as good as London or Outer London. Improving attendance remains a significant challenge. Rates are two percentage points below pre – pandemic levels, and Persistence Absence is running at double the pre pandemic level, based on the 4 half term data.

All Schools (primary and secondary)	Merton	London	Outer London	National
Attendance	93.6%	93.3%	93.4%	92.8%
Absence	6.4%	6.7%	6.6%	7.2%
Persistent Absence	18.7%	20.2%	19.7%	20.9%

*Autumn 22 and Spring 23*

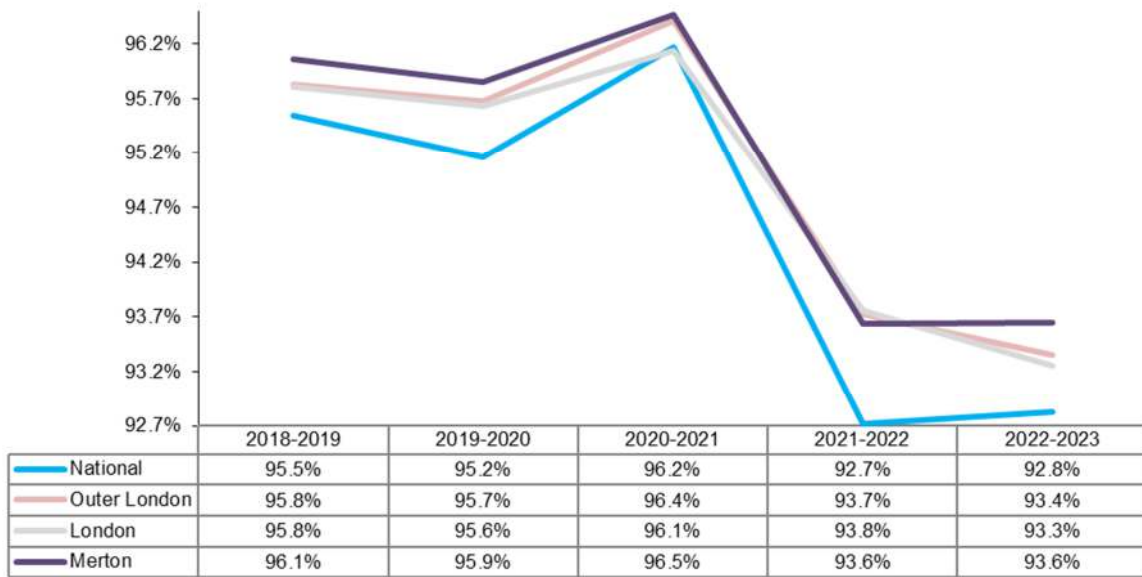
5.1.4 Closer analysis of the data presents a more nuanced picture. In several groups attendance is falling rather than improving or being maintained. Boys' attendance is worse than last year and below the London average. Children eligible for free school meals (disadvantaged) have poorer attendance and higher persistent absence than across London. Children in receipt of SEN support have better than national and London attendance, but those with Education Health and Care plans in Merton schools have lower attendance than elsewhere in London. The breakdown by ethnicity also highlights areas of focus around Black/ White Caribbean and Black African pupils. Schools look at their data by group and look at emerging patterns around their cohorts.

Contextual Groups	Number of Pupils	Overall Absence - All Schools				Persistence Absentees – All Schools			
		Merton 2022-23	Merton 2021-22	London 2022-23	National 2022-23	Merton 2022-23	Merton 2021-22	London 2022-23	National 2022-23
All Pupils	23298	6.4%	6.4%	6.7%	7.2%	18.7%	18.9%	20.2%	19.7%
<b>Gender</b>									
Female	11184	6.3%	6.5%	6.7%	7.2%	18.1%	19.1%	20.0%	21.1%
Male	12114	6.7%	6.5%	6.7%	7.1%	20.2%	19.4%	20.4%	20.7%
Gap		0.4%	0.1%	0.0%	-0.1%	2.1%	0.3%	0.4%	-0.4%
<b>Disadvantaged</b>									
Disadvantaged	6109	9.2%	8.7%	9.0%	10.8%	31.1%	30.0%	30.4%	35.3%
All other pupils	17189	5.6%	5.7%	5.9%	6.0%	15.0%	15.7%	16.5%	16.2%
Gap		3.6%	3.0%	3.2%	4.8%	16.1%	14.3%	13.8%	19.2%
<b>Special Educational Needs (SEN)</b>									
No Identified SEN or unclassified	18758	5.8%	5.9%	6.3%	6.6%	16.5%	17.0%	18.5%	18.9%
SEN Support	3243	8.5%	8.3%	9.0%	10.1%	28.2%	27.5%	28.9%	30.8%
SEN (with Statement or EHC plan)	1297	11.9%	10.3%	9.8%	12.0%	36.1%	32.0%	31.7%	34.7%
<b>Ethnic Group</b> (White British and five largest or priority ethnic minority groups)									
White British	6630	7.2%	7.4%	7.3%	7.4%	20.9%	21.8%	21.2%	20.9%
White Other	4377	6.0%	6.0%	6.7%	7.1%	16.6%	17.1%	19.8%	21.8%
Mixed Ethnicity	2884	7.5%	7.3%	7.5%	7.6%	23.5%	22.8%	23.2%	23.1%
Asian Other	2227	5.4%	5.1%	5.6%	5.7%	13.4%	12.4%	15.4%	16.0%
Black African	1797	4.8%	4.5%	4.9%	4.3%	12.2%	11.6%	12.5%	10.7%
Asian Pakistani	1243	7.4%	7.2%	7.6%	7.6%	25.8%	24.9%	25.8%	25.8%
Black Caribbean	740	7.8%	7.7%	8.2%	7.9%	26.5%	26.1%	27.4%	26.0%
White and Black Caribbean	671	10.0%	9.0%	9.7%	9.5%	33.8%	30.2%	32.6%	30.6%

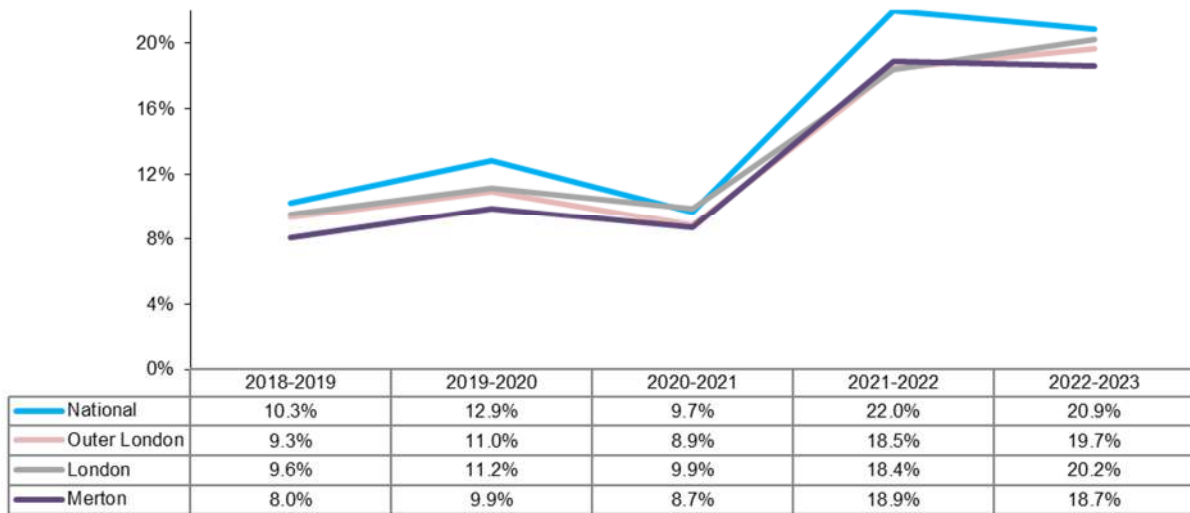
## Six half term headline data

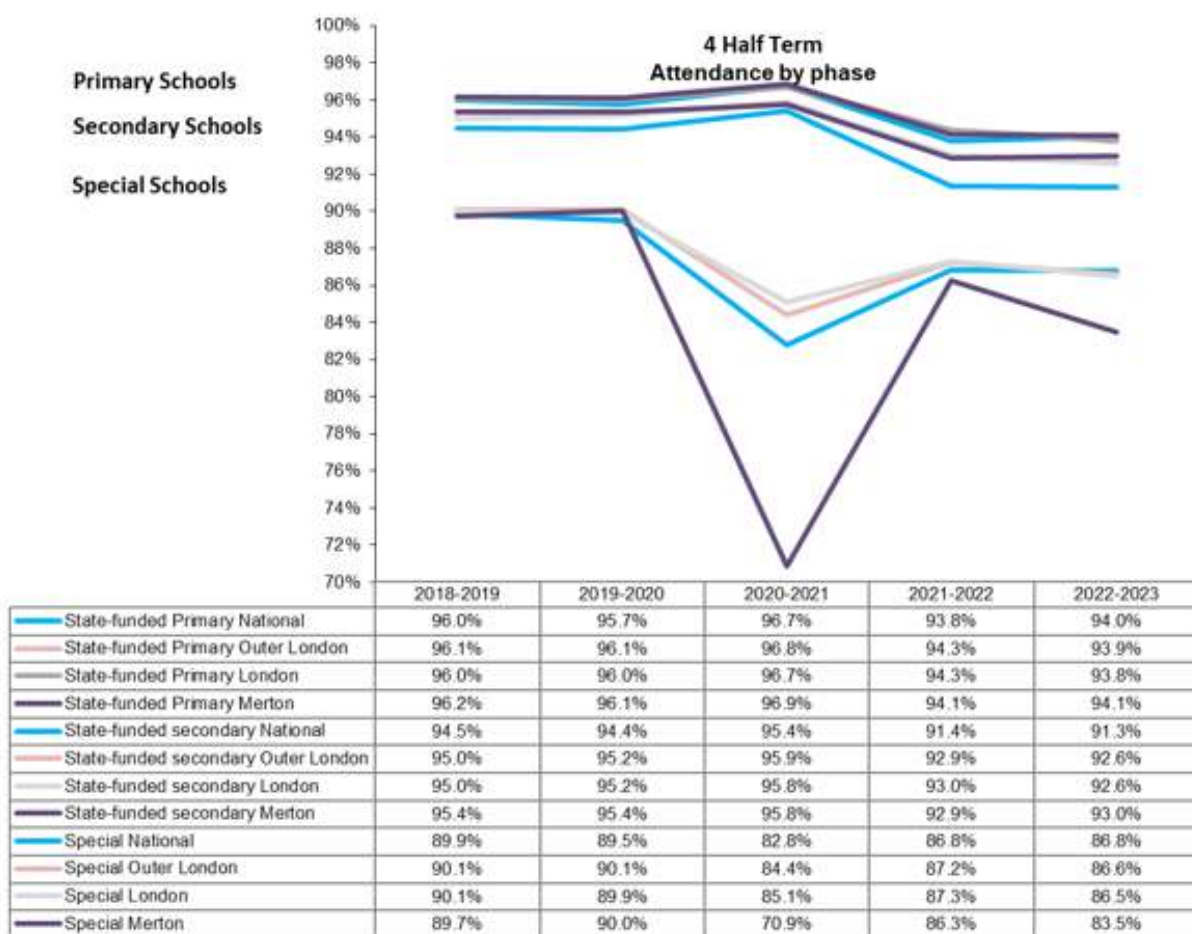
- 5.1.5 Attendance is also measured using the data covering six terms (full academic year). For the academic year 2022/23, this data will not be available until later in March this year. Comparative performance is therefore presented using 4 half term data over time. The four half term data shows attendance in Merton secondary schools as improving.
- 5.1.6 Merton primary schools have maintained strong attendance against a falling picture in London and outer London.
- 5.1.7 Merton special school attendance was below national and outer London pre pandemic and this has continued post pandemic. We have undertaken a detailed analysis of this data with our special schools. Similarly with Persistent Absence the levels are increasing and below comparators in special schools.

#### 4 Half Term Attendance: Primary and Secondary Schools

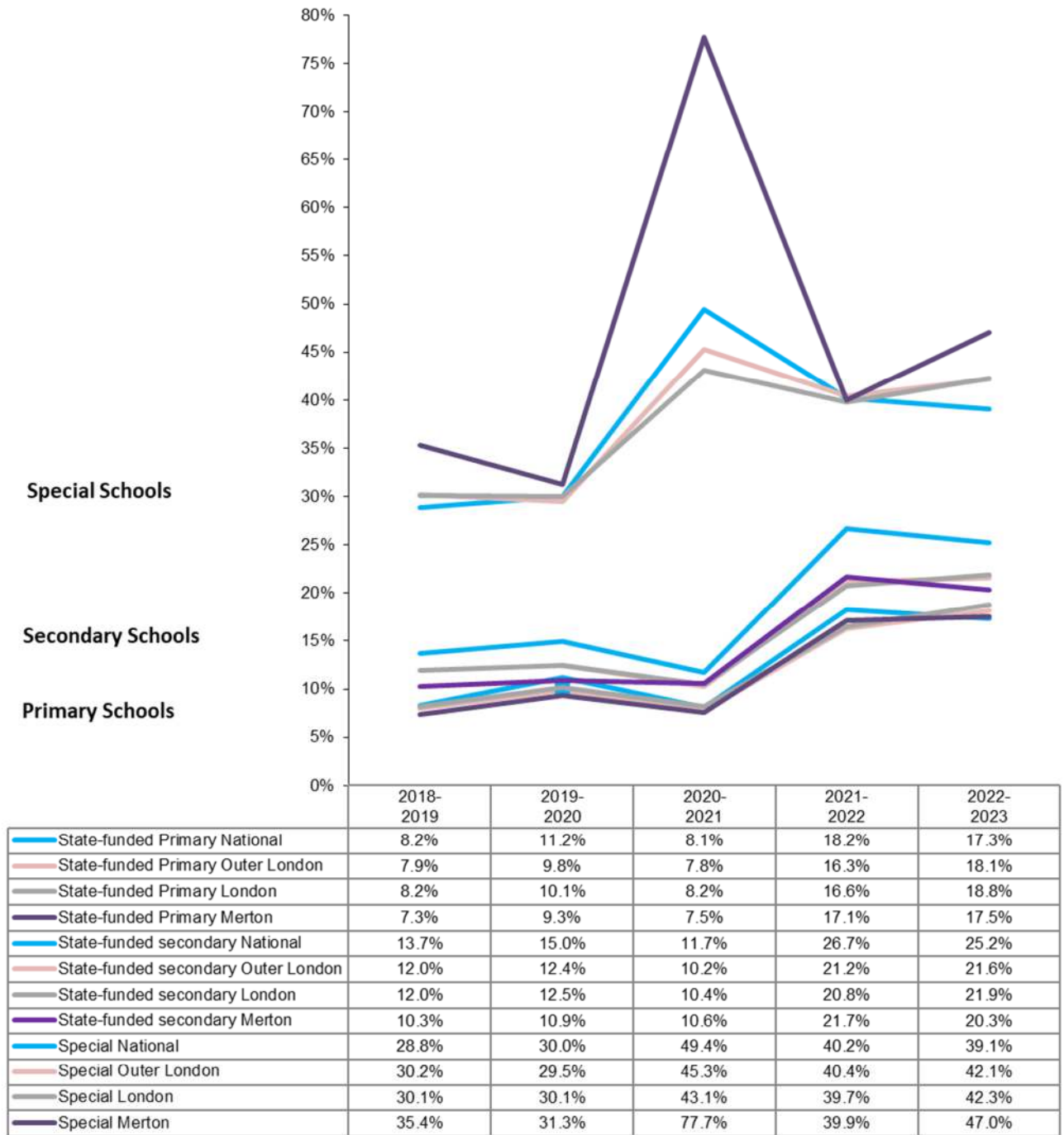


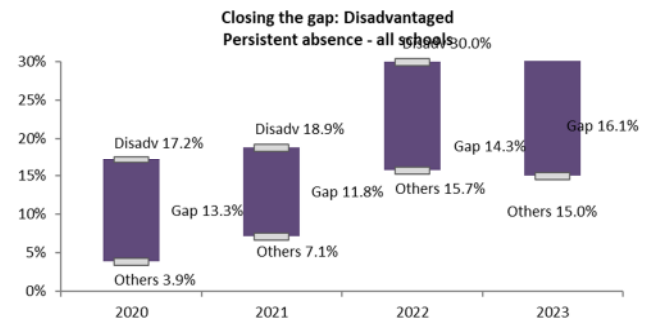
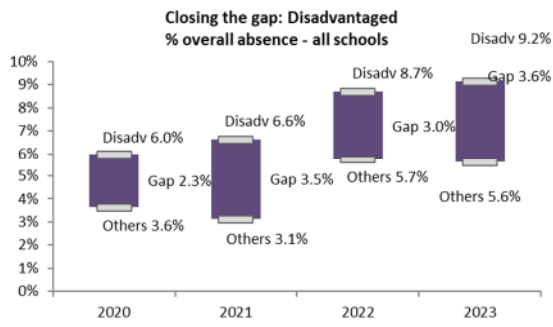
#### 4 Half Term Attendance Persistent Absence 10% Primary and Secondary Schools





### 4 Half Term Persistent Absence 10%





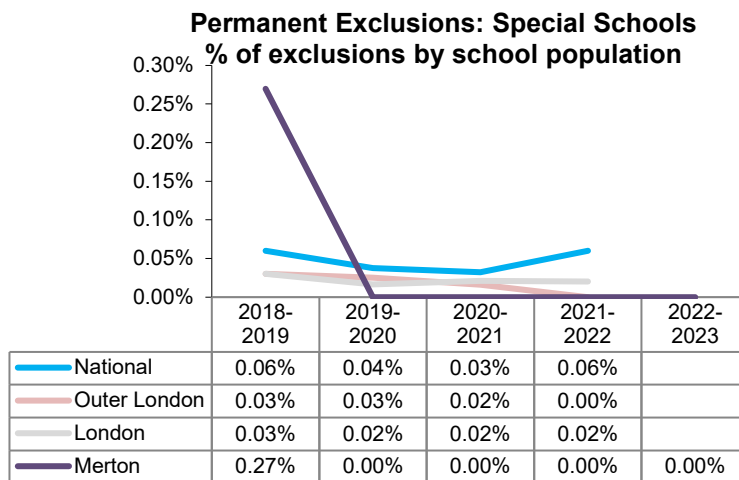
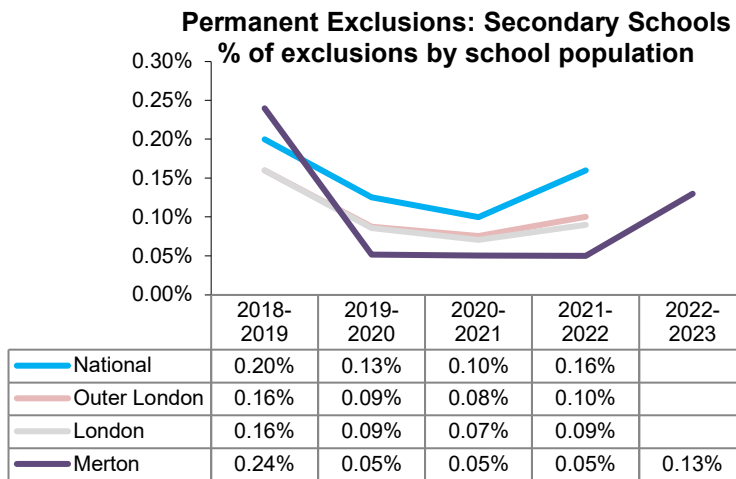
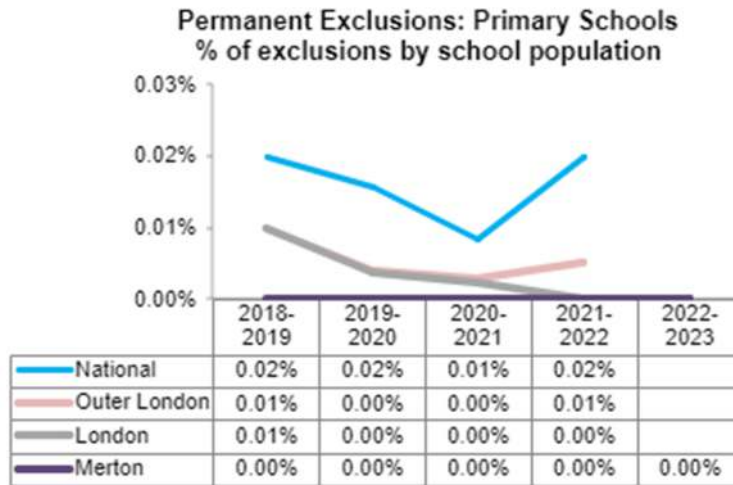
5.1.7 The gap between disadvantaged and all pupils has remained the same in terms of attendance and Persistent Absence compared to the previous year. However it is significantly wider than pre pandemic levels.



# Exclusions performance information and analysis

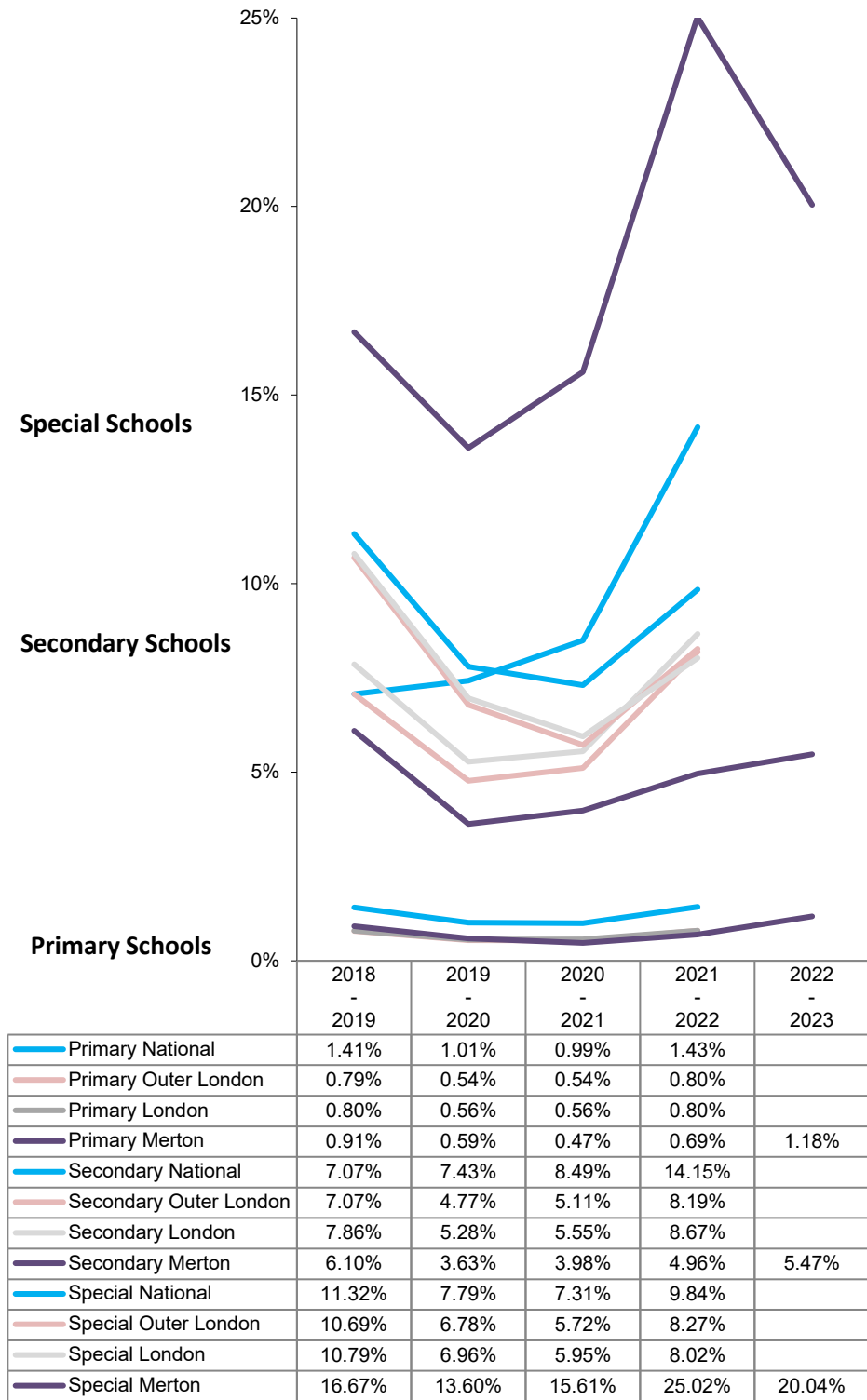
## Headline data and analysis

5.2.1 Merton data is available for 2022 -2023, but the most recent data available for the national and London averages is from 2021-2022.



- 5.2.2 Merton had no primary or special school permanent exclusions in 2022-2023. This was achieved through ongoing significant and complex inclusion work carried out by primary schools and the Local Authority's Virtual Behaviour Service (VBS). This position has been maintained for a number of years.
- 5.2.3 The number of permanent exclusions in secondary schools increased significantly in the autumn term of 2022 and then decreased across 2023. In autumn 2022 Merton experienced a rise in robbery of school age pupils and youth violence between groups of young people. Most of the exclusions related to this increase in serious youth violence and contextual risk. Significant work was undertaken by Merton with its partners to reduce this risk by December 2022, as a result of which the levels of crime, contextual risk and exclusion fell. We also undertook a review of the data with all secondary heads and identified if there were actions we could take to engage children to avoid incidents or if we could respond differently. The introduction of the Young Peoples Substance Misuse protocol was part of this work.
- 5.2.4 There were 29 additional potential permanent exclusions that were prevented in secondary schools because of the partnership work with families, as well as with the VBS, schools and Melbury College. This was a rise from 12 in 2021/22, but was in line the figures pre-pandemic (in 2019/20) when there were 26 exclusions prevented.

**Fixed Term Exclusions  
% of exclusions by school population**

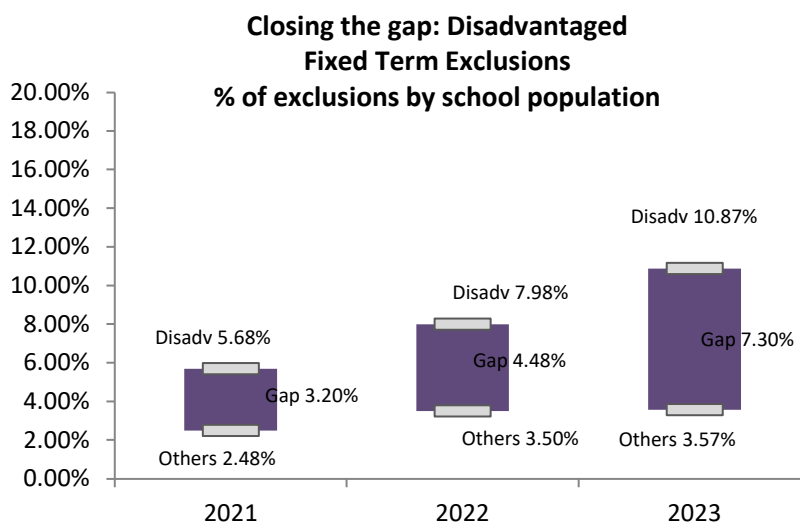


- 5.2.5 Fixed Term Exclusions are now called suspensions to differentiate them from Permanent Exclusions
- 5.2.6 The number of suspensions has remained flat in primary schools and the rate is below that seen nationally and in London. Across London and nationally suspensions are rising.
- 5.2.7 The number of suspensions in secondary schools has risen slightly and is below London and national averages. This level of suspensions is 4<sup>th</sup> lowest in England. This needs to be seen against the wider rising Permanent Exclusions figure. Thus, demonstrating that the more serious issues in Merton schools relate to a small number of pupils.
- 5.2.8 The comparative data that allows analysis of suspensions in the secondary phase shows that suspensions are much lower than other London and nationally by gender, disadvantage and for those with special educational needs. However, even with lower levels of suspension, there is a disproportionality in Merton for pupils of mixed ethnicity. Most ethnic groups including White British have a higher percentage of pupils excluded expect for white other which is lower.
- 5.2.9 The figures for suspensions in Special Schools are based on small cohorts, with individual exclusions therefore being represented as a high percentage. There has been a slight fall which is welcomed but they are still too high.

### Main pupil groups (fixed term exclusions, secondary phase)

Contextual Groups	Number of Pupils	Fixed Term Exclusions: Secondary % of exclusions by school population		
		Merton 2022-23	London 2021-22	National 2021-22
All Pupils	10714	5.47%	8.61%	13.99%
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	5149	4.45%	6.09%	10.43%
Male	5659	6.31%	11.12%	17.51%
Gap		1.86%	5.03%	7.08%
<b>Disadvantaged</b>				
Disadvantaged	2788	10.87%	16.40%	34.36%
All other pupils	7926	3.57%	6.07%	8.61%
Gap		7.30%	10.33%	25.75%
<b>Special Educational Needs (SEN)</b>				
No Special Educational Needs	8782	3.22%	6.57%	10.30%
SEN Support	1648	13.47%	21.22%	36.16%
SEN (with Statement or EHC plan)	378	21.43%	24.58%	38.18%
<b>Ethnic Group (White British and six largest or priority ethnic minority groups)</b>				
White British	2917	6.55%	3.36%	5.31%
White Other	2081	4.32%	6.02%	13.82%
Asian Other	1312	2.82%	1.04%	1.21%
Asian Pakistani	637	2.04%	1.70%	3.06%

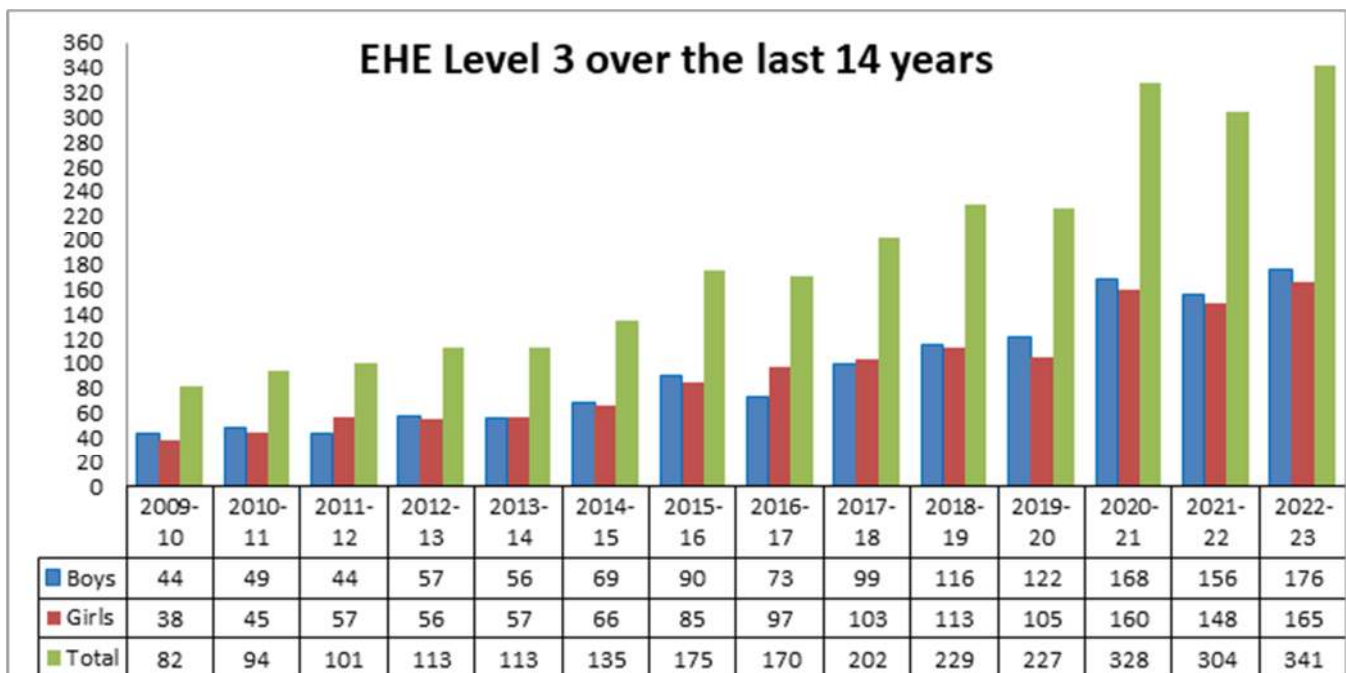
Mixed Other	1274	8.79%	3.02%	4.27%
Black African	1030	5.53%	3.23%	3.21%
Black Caribbean	471	6.58%	6.42%	6.69%



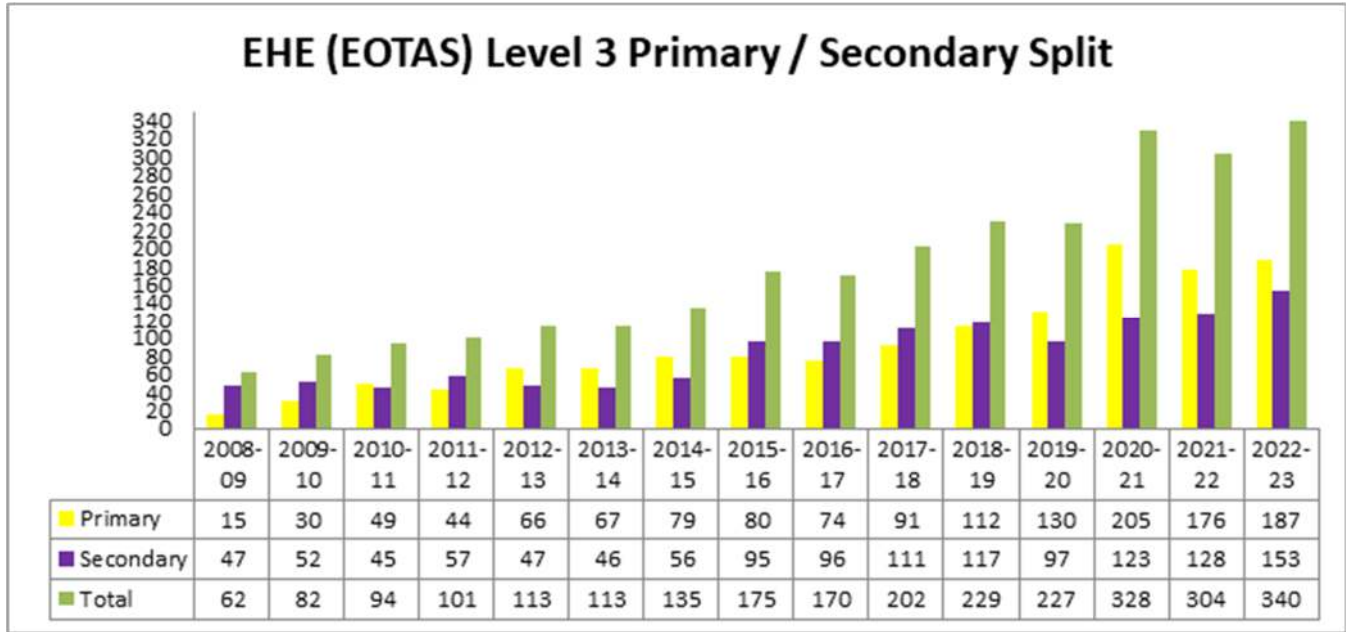
5.2.9 The gap between disadvantaged pupils and all pupils excluded has risen significantly in Merton however the gap is much smaller than London or national. Some of the same factors increasing exclusions for pupils eligible for Free School Meals nationally may be in evidence in Merton too at a lower level.

## Elective Home Education (EHE)

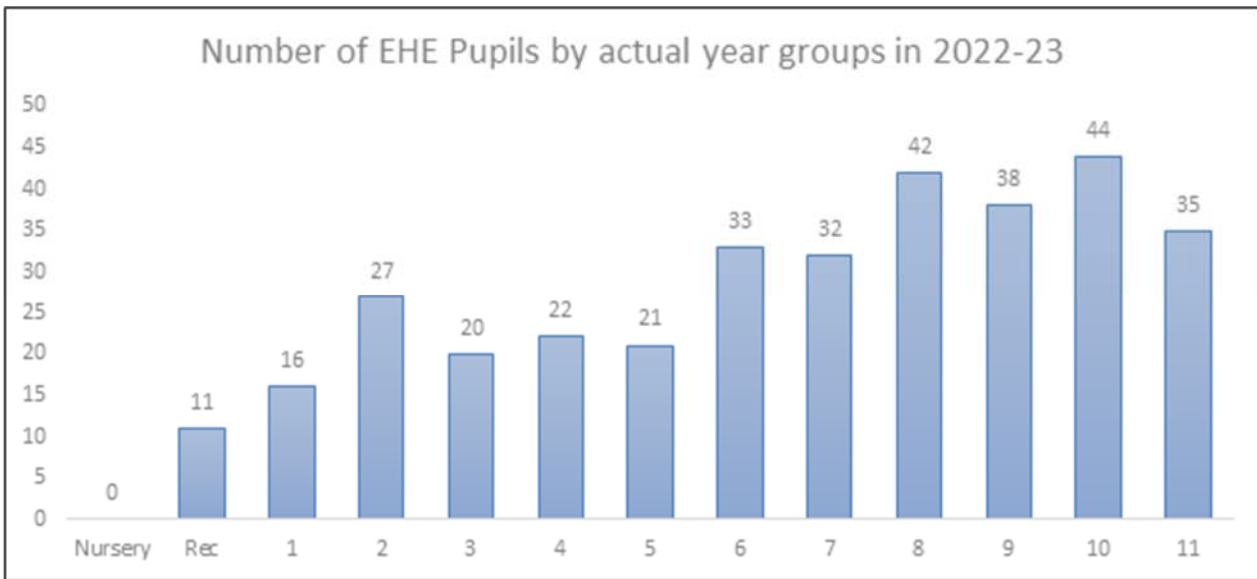
- 5.3.1 Parents have the right to electively home educate their children. The Education Welfare Service (EWS) and Merton School Improvement track these children to ensure that education is being provided. Following the steep rise in 2020/21, this fell back slightly in 2021/2 but has risen again in 2022/23. Thus, post pandemic the volume of children being electively home educated has stayed high. The average for the three years post pandemic is 52% higher than the average for the 3 years pre pandemic. This rise in the 3-year averages is even higher in primary than in secondary.
- 5.3.2 This year there has been a rise in the numbers of both Year 6 and Year 10 where parents have chosen to EHE. A number of these came from independent schools that had closed during the year, or where, due to financial constraints, families could no longer afford private education. Many of these and other families have chosen home education because there are more online education resources available that were developed during the pandemic. There is also a greater awareness of elective home education, and, combined with the increase in anxiety/ mental health concerns among young people, this has also resulted in higher numbers.
- 5.3.3 The rise in the numbers of children being Electively Home Educated is a significant resource challenge to the Local Authority, but the processes are inspected in all types of Ofsted inspections and has been found to be robust. A temporary apprentice post was added to support EHE administration in 2022/23.
- 5.3.4



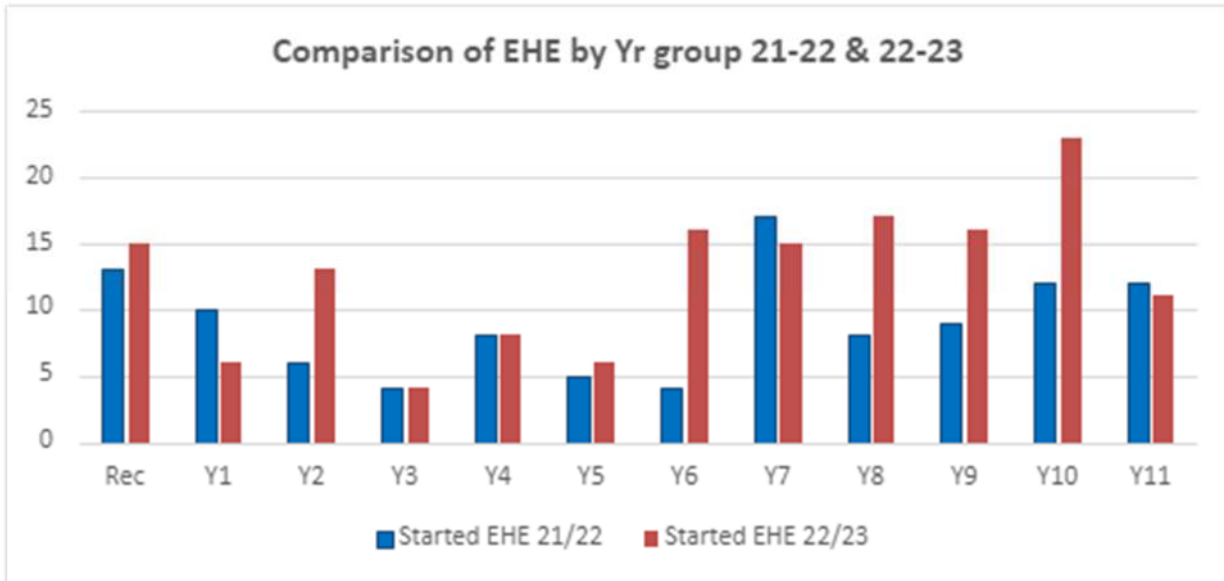
5.3.5



5.3.6



5.3.7



5.3.8 Local Authorities have a duty to decide if the education is appropriate, but parents have no obligation to send in any information and the LA does not have a right of access to families.

5.3.9 All families are offered a visit to review the education, or the opportunity to provide a report, which is reviewed. In 2019-20, video/telephone reviews were offered instead of home visits from March 2020 (to accommodate social distancing due to Covid 19), and it was found that some families who had previously chosen to provide reports were willing to have a video review instead, thus increasing contact with those families. We continue to offer video/telephone reviews, but our preference is to have a home visit. For children on children with Child in Need or Child Protection plans, we plan for a home visit.

5.3.10 In 2022-23 the LA carried out 123 reviews and 20.3% had home visits or in person meetings for their review (a significant rise from 4% the in 2021/2), 30.9% provided a report to enable a review and the remaining 48.7% had a review via a video call. Of the reviews made via video call or in person, 92.3% of children were present, this was an increase from 69% in 2021/2 and is now back to pre-pandemic levels.

5.3.11 14 reviews were deemed not appropriate in 2022-23. This represents an increase but is in line with the overall increase in the number of children commencing elective home education. If a child has two consecutive reviews deemed “not appropriate” they are not able to continue with EHE and added to our CME panel and referred to School Admissions for an education provision to be allocated. Some families also decide to cease EHE because they wish their child to return to school or realise it is not working and these children also become “Children Missing Education” and are referred to School Admissions. In 2022-23 18 Children were referred in this way.

5.3.12 In the absence of any information being provided by a family/carer or an application for a school place, Merton will assume no education is occurring and proceed accordingly. In 2022/ 23 eight School



Attendance Orders (SAO) were commenced. (2021/22 - 5; 2018/18 - 3). As the volume of children commencing EHE has risen the number of SAOs commenced has risen. No school attendance orders were eventually issued as families engaged in the school admission process.

5.3.13 On registering a child as being home educated, checks are made to see if there are any safeguarding concerns. If this is the case the lead professional is informed of this change in education provision and the EWS liaise with them during the process, for example where there is a Child Protection Plan. The number of children on Child in Need (CIN) plans was higher (14 across the year) as was the number on Child Protection (CP) Plans (4 across the year). However, as the total number of children has risen this is the same percentage as the previous year. A significant proportion of families who elect to home educate were previously or currently known to Children Social Care (41%) during the academic year 2022-23, this is a large percentage and highlights the vulnerability of this group of young people. Referrals are made the safeguarding hub if concerns are identified.

## 2022/23 Inclusion priorities, impact and key actions taken

### 5.4.1

**Priority:** To work with special schools to address lower attendance and higher suspension (fixed term exclusion) rates.

**Actions taken to secure impact:**

- Special Headteachers meetings to collectively discuss attendance;
- Deep dive attendance report to analyse the issues around special school attendance;
- Multi agency attendance panel set up in one special school to mirror work in the other two special schools;
- Merton School Improvement work at one special school analysing and challenging suspensions.

**Impact:**

- Greater understanding of the drivers for both attendance and suspensions in special schools.
- Case work to target non-attenders through multi agency work.
- Plans to increase the vocational elements of the curriculum which were lost with providers who closed during the pandemic to increase key stage 4 engagement

### 5.4.2

**Priority:** To work with all schools to implement the Government's proposed new attendance guidance prior to full implementation in September 2023 in particular focus on developing an approach to severe absence.

**Actions taken to secure impact:**

- Action Plan to implement guidance developed under the Early Help and Neglect subgroup of the Merton Safeguarding Children's Partnership (MSCP);
- Attendance at DfE briefings and workshops to look at other models of delivery;
- Exploratory work to understand the new Severe Absence attendance category (attendance less than 50%);
- Briefings for all school leaders and governors;
- Multi agency self-assessment begun.

**Impact:**

- EWS moved to be funded by the de-delegated element of the Dedicated Schools Grant, as it is now covering functions that schools are responsible for;
- Multi agency self assessment completed over the summer holidays.

### 5.4.3

**Priority:** To develop an offer for emotionally based school avoidance in line with the i-thrive model.

**Actions taken to secure impact:**

Emotionally Based School Avoidance Guidance for professionals developed by a multi-agency group rolled out to schools so that schools know where to go for help with mental health related non-attendance at school.

**Impact:**

- Toolkit rolled out to all schools
- Mental Health in schools drop in for EBSA cases set up.

- Impact on attendance to be measured over time.

5.4.4

**Priority:** To develop an approach across all school support services to build ordinarily available SEND capacity in schools.

**Actions taken to secure impact:**

- Ordinarily Available Guidance developed with schools;
- LA SEND support services, and partners, developed a more joined up offer for schools at the whole school level.

**Impact:**

- Better support in schools for SEND pupils as a result of better understanding of what should be ordinarily available.
- More joined up support for schools.

5.4.5

**Priority:** To establish a new site for Merton Medical Education Service to expand the offer to children out of school due to their medical needs.

**Actions taken to secure impact:**

- Lavender site set up for KS4 pupils with medical needs where the local authority is responsible for their education under section 19 of the Children Act;
- Staffing and budget issues resolved;
- Ensured safeguarding processes are robust.

**Impact:**

The Lavender site is now running very well provide good quality on site education in suitable premises to an increasing cohort of children where there is medical evidence that they cannot be educated in school. This facility is part of Merton's Pupil Referral Unit with the Canterbury Centre. External review of safeguarding of the whole of Melbury report to Governors provided strong reassurance.

## Inclusion Priorities for 2023/24

- Review the LA's section 19 responsibilities in line with the national report from the Ombudsman and act accordingly
- Implement the action plan from Merton's multi agency attendance self-assessment to improve rates of attendance in Merton
- Develop an Alternative Provision steering group to monitor the quality of AP provision
- Safely manage the volume increase in EHE and review resources accordingly.
- Develop a project group of schools to work on a greater understanding of trauma and attachment to inform approaches to social and emotional and mental health needs in schools.

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Ofsted outcomes by school as of September 2023

Outstanding	Good	Requiring improvement	Inadequate
<p><b>Primary</b> Bishop Gilpin Holy Trinity Merton Park Singlegate Wimbledon Chase Wimbledon Park</p> <p><b>Secondary</b> Ricards Lodge Rutlish</p> <p><b>Special</b> Perseid Cricket Green</p> <p><b>Academies</b> Harris Merton Harris Morden Harris Primary Merton Harris Wimbledon Park Community</p>	<p><b>Primary</b> Abbotsbury All Saints Aragon Bond Cranmer Dundonald Garfield Gorringe Park Haslemere Hillcross Hollymount Joseph Hood Liberty Links Lonesome Malmesbury Merton Abbey Morden Pelham Poplar Sacred Heart St John Fisher St Mark's St Mary's St Matthews St Teresa's St Peter &amp; Paul St Thomas of Canterbury The Priory The Sherwood West Wimbledon William Morris</p> <p><b>Secondary</b> Raynes Park Ursuline Wimbledon College</p> <p><b>Special</b> Melrose</p> <p><b>PRU</b> Canterbury</p> <p><b>Academies &amp; Free Schools</b> Beecholme St Mark's Academy</p>	<p><b>Primary</b> Hatfeild</p> <p><b>Academies</b> Stanford</p>	<p><b>Primary</b> Benedict</p>

## Appendix B: Context for 2022/23

1. In 2022-23, Merton Schools continued to support children and their families. This was only the second year without significant disruption caused by Covid lockdowns, and schools were still dealing with significant challenges around learning behaviours and attendance, which is reflected in data at a national and local level. For example, students who sat their A levels in 2023 had not sat a public examination before as GCSEs were assessed by their school in 2021. Schools remained committed to working with the wider Children's Services and Health to ensure the best outcomes for our young people.
2. Key focuses for school leaders during the academic year 2022 – 2023 included:
  - Setting their own priorities for school improvement within the constraints of the funding formula for schools;
  - Assessing developmental gaps for particular cohorts and groups of children including those in the Early Years, those with special educational needs and disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, and implementing support to enable catch up;
  - Supporting a small but growing cohort of children and young people with complex needs;
  - Ensuring progress was accelerated to make sure that children and young people were prepared for the return of fully standardised assessments;
  - Responding to and supporting families' concerns in the context of the personal and economic challenges that many continued to face;
  - Improving pupil attendance following the pandemic;
  - Managing staff workload so that staff felt supported to maintain positive health and wellbeing, and enabled to do their jobs;
  - Fully embedding the curriculum as Ofsted inspection 'transitional arrangements' came to an end meaning that the full extent of the curriculum intent, implementation and impact would be inspected.
3. Merton schools continue to have strong relationships with Merton's Children's Social Care services, with the Virtual School for Children in Care and Children with a Social Worker and with the Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership. School staff understand local processes for accessing support for vulnerable children and families and for making referrals to the Children's Hub when seeking to safeguard their learners. Support from the innovative 'Social Worker in Schools' programme, and from the DSL supervision programme continued to be provided across the year. 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', the key safeguarding document for education settings, was updated in September 2022, including:
  - Advice on sexual violence and harassment between children in schools and colleges;
  - Safeguarding implications for schools of human rights and equality legislation;
  - Information on managing low level concerns;
  - Reinforcing the importance of talking to parents about children's access to online sites when away from school.
4. Merton schools worked closely within the Merton local area SEND partnership to ensure the needs of all children with special educational needs and disabilities were met. In particular there was work to include children without the need for an EHCP. Schools were also an integral part of the LA's Safety Valve work. During the Joint area SEND revisit inspection, carried out by Ofsted and the CQC, inspectors found that 'the partnership between education, health and care leaders has improved', and that 'leaders from education providers say that there is now more opportunity to contribute their suggestions about the use of resources. They can see the positive impact this better collaboration is having on meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND'.

5. The Government published its Special Educational Needs and Alternative Provision (SENDAP) Improvement Plan in March 2023. This followed a public consultation on proposals in the SEND Review: Right Support, Right Place, Right Time, published in 2022. The plan included the following:

- A national system underpinned by National Standards:
  - To set out what provision headteachers/CEOs, governing boards, college principals, directors of children’s services and Integrated Care Boards, need to make available for all children with SEND in every local area, nursery, school and college.
- Local SEND and alternative provision partnerships will be introduced to bring together partners to plan and commission support for children and young people with SEND and in alternative provision.
- The plan proposes to standardise the templates and processes around Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), to improve consistency and best practice, and to digitise EHCPs.
- To help parents see what they can expect in their area, the plan proposes a tailored list of suitable settings, informed by the local inclusion plan.
- The creation of a three-tier alternative provision system will focus on targeted early support within mainstream school, time-limited intensive placements in an alternative provision setting, and longer-term placements to support return to mainstream or a sustainable post-16 destination.
- Guidance will be published to support effective transitions between all stages of education and into employment and adult services.
- A skilled and knowledgeable workforce is key to ensuring that all pupils have access to high quality teaching. It is important that every teacher is able to adapt their practice to meet the needs of their classroom. Therefore, there is an emphasis in the plan that SEND expertise is held at every level.
- Publishing a local and national inclusion dashboard to support the development of local inclusion plans.
- Strengthening redress for individual disagreements by clarifying who is responsible for resolving complaints.

Merton schools and the Children Lifelong Learning and Families department will consider the learning coming from the ‘Change Programme’ local authorities who are now testing these developments to understand how policy and practice in Merton may need to change.

6. In December 2022 the Government announced that the Education Bill (which followed the Education White Paper from March 2022) had been dropped, identifying that whilst some aspects would not be moved forward, others did not require the legislation provided by the Bill to be implemented. Since then the following aspects of the Bill have been taken forward outside a legislative context:

- The development of ‘Trust standards’ for Multi Academy Trusts (MATs)
- Guidance to improve school attendance
- Consultation on a new framework for Elective Home Education

## Appendix C: School Improvement in Merton

1. Merton Local Authority continued to secure the improvement of its schools during 2022/23, working in partnership with leaders and other partners to ensure that local maintained schools and academies provide the best educational offer for children and young people.
2. There is no expectation from national government that school improvement functions are carried out in the way outlined in the next few pages, and funding to do so from central government is limited. However, the Council and the Schools' Forum have made the decision to maintain funding for this school improvement offer in order to support the maintenance of the high standards currently achieved by Merton schools. There is a commitment from continued partnership working to continue to support schools in this way.
3. Merton refreshed its School Improvement Strategy for 2022 – 2023 in light of the current local and national contexts. This set out the LA's principles, aims, priorities and mechanisms to ensure that all Merton schools are supported and challenged to continue to improve and to provide the best possible education for the children and young people in their care. The Strategy outlined:
  - the national and local contexts for schools (in particular in relation to the pandemic)
  - principles and aims of School Improvement in Merton;
  - priorities for improvement in Merton;
  - partnership working in Merton between schools, the Local Authority and other partners;
  - the Local Authority's role in monitoring, providing challenge and support, and intervention in Merton schools;
  - school categorisation and levels of support.

### The Principles

4. The following principles are used for school improvement in Merton:
  - All children and young people in Merton deserve to receive education that is at least good, and which they enjoy. The aspiration is for as many as possible to be in provision that is judged to be outstanding.
  - Much of the expertise which ensures schools are good or better is located in schools already. This expertise needs to be maximised and shared, building strong working relationships with education leaders in the area. This is particularly important as the government's vision of a schools' led system becomes embedded and the model of school improvement needs to change as national funding arrangements change.
  - Partnership working should explicitly ensure that all education professionals working in Merton, both in schools and the LA, work together for the benefit of all children and young people.
  - Support and challenge for all Merton maintained schools is provided on the basis of the rich information gathered from schools themselves, and using the resources available to the Local Authority, including the work of Merton Education Partners and Advisers, and of other LA officers, with Merton Schools.
  - Support and challenge is provided to schools in inverse proportion to success. Where concerns are identified, both the support and challenge increase responsively.
  - Merton Education Partners and Advisers will work in collaboration with Attain funded initiatives and projects, for example with regard to induction, mentoring and coaching for new headteachers, networks to support curriculum development and the Black Lives Matter and Equalities work through which schools have developed individual strengths and successes that they have shared through LA forums and conferences.

### Partnership working

5. Collaboration between Merton schools remains strong, and Merton recognises that building on this strength is of paramount importance both to seek to secure the best outcomes for Merton’s children and young people, and to ensure resilience and mutual support with the Merton school community is strong. The following are key mechanisms for collaboration and partnership working within Merton:
- The majority of Merton schools are members of local school clusters. These are organised as follows:
    - East Mitcham
    - Mitcham Town
    - Morden
    - West Wimbledon
    - WimbledonIn addition, there is a cluster of Catholic schools, and a secondary phase cluster. Many schools will use not just the cluster relationships, but links with other schools both within Merton and beyond to share and gather best practice.
  - The schools’ partnership, ATTAIN, is made up of members from primary, secondary and special schools across the Borough, as well as members of the Education and Early Help Department of the Local Authority. It aims to improve the quality of learning and teaching through collaborative expertise; to share best practice in order to secure high quality provision in a cost effective way; and to develop Merton schools’ collective ability to inspire, and support and challenge each other to enrich Merton schools and Merton communities.
  - Alongside our own skilled workforce, we utilised the skills and expertise of senior leaders within our schools, and in partnership with teaching schools to ensure that schools have access to the most appropriate support for their needs.
  - The Merton Special Training Alliance (MSTA) provides support for schools including coaching and leadership development programmes. This offer complements and enhances the local offer of support for Merton schools. The MSTA also offered a Schools’ Direct programme to maximise the new to teaching recruitment opportunities for Merton Schools.
  - Teach Wimbledon is an alliance of local schools which, in partnership with the Local Authority, ran another Schools Direct new teacher training programme, again strengthening recruitment options for Merton schools.
  - Merton also seeks to develop collaborative relationships beyond its boundaries. The South West London School Effectiveness Partnership (SWLSEP) takes partnership working for the LA and Merton schools beyond the Borough border. Best practice and expertise is shared through joint programmes of professional development, focusing in particular on leadership, governance and curriculum development.
  - In addition, Merton Local Authority is a strategic partner with the Wandle Teaching School Hub, the Hub covering South West London as established by the DfE.
  - Where expertise is not yet available locally, Merton looks to draw on the expertise of education professionals further afield.

#### **Merton School Improvement (MSI) Team**

6. Merton continues to:
- Support and challenge schools to remain good or outstanding;



- Support and challenge schools to improve from an Ofsted ‘requires improvement’ judgement as soon as possible;
  - Support schools in responding to national policy changes and government initiatives;
  - Focus on support for pupils pastorally and academically;
  - Focus on support for staff, particularly Early Career Teachers (ECTs) whose training programmes were disrupted during the pandemic, although this role is moving to our Teaching Schools from September 2023 for new ECTs.
7. The Merton School Improvement (MSI) team works with schools, providing the support and challenge required. The team comprises inspectors (known as Merton Education Partners, MEPs) and advisors who work with schools, providing both in school support and challenge, and universal, central support, (mostly through continuing professional development opportunities).
8. The MSI team works closely with a range of other LA teams and services which contribute to the wider school improvement agenda in Merton. These include:
- Virtual School for Looked after Children
  - Schools’ Management and Information Service Support Team (Schools’ IT support)
  - Governor Services
  - SEN and Disabilities Integrated Service
  - Virtual Behaviour Service
  - Language and Learning Support Team
  - Family Wellbeing Service
  - Education Welfare Service
  - Traveller Education Service
  - Early Years’ Service
  - Admissions Team
  - Performance, Improvement and Partnerships Service

### **Monitoring, challenge and support, and intervention**

9. All maintained schools continue to be linked to a MEP, and receive at least two visits a year. During these visits, MEPs will seek to work as closely as possible with school leaders in the individual context of each school, supporting them to understand their school, and their strengths and areas for development. Leaders and governors will be challenged and supported, particularly with reference to the areas covered by the Ofsted framework, including safeguarding. The first part of the autumn term MEP visit (before October half term), consisting largely of discussion with leaders, will focus largely on the 2022 outcomes from statutory tests/assessments/screening and public examinations. Advisory support will also be available for all schools from the MSI team.
10. Where schools are evaluating themselves to be less than good, or where there are concerns about performance, support from the MEP and other officers will increase. Advisers will offer targeted support for identified schools, focusing on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching with regard to English, mathematics, equalities (including for those pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium), assessment, the curriculum and Early Years. Schools where concerns are identified will also be asked to work with the LA through Support and Challenge Groups.

### **Support and Challenge Groups**

11. A Support and Challenge Group may be provided to schools causing concern in any area of the Ofsted framework for the inspection of schools.

12. Support and Challenge Groups are set up in partnership with the school, through first approaching the Headteacher, with the expectation that each school will engage in the process in the context of the LA duty to promote high standards.
13. The purpose of Support and Challenge Groups is to:
  - challenge and hold the school to account for improvements required in line with the school's action plan/development plan;
  - monitor and evaluate progress towards those improvements;
  - provide the leadership of the school with an opportunity to rehearse key messages about the progress the school is making;
  - ensure support for the school is effectively co-ordinated, and broker additional support where needed;
  - provide advice and guidance to the school from a range of school improvement experts; and
  - enable the LA to get a better understanding of the school.

## Appendix D: Performance Tables KS2

School name	% of pupils meeting expected standard	% of pupils achieving at a higher standard	Progress score			Average score in reading	Average score in maths
			<a href="#">Reading</a>	<a href="#">Writing</a>	<a href="#">Maths</a>		
Abbotsbury Primary School	47%	4%	-0.6	-0.7	1.6	104	106
All Saints' CofE Primary School	83%	17%	3.0	1.4	3.1	109	109
Aragon Primary School	83%	25%	1.2	2.5	3.7	108	110
Beecholme Primary School	65%	4%	0.0	-0.9	1.5	106	106
Benedict Academy	80%	15%	5.1	5.0	6.5	107	108
Bishop Gilpin CofE Primary School	88%	42%	3.2	3.5	5.8	110	112
Bond Primary School	40%	2%	2.3	0.4	-1.6	101	101
Cranmer Primary School	67%	7%	1.5	0.1	1.8	106	105
Dundonald Primary School	76%	17%	4.0	0.1	5.7	111	111
Garfield Primary School	65%	13%	-2.9	0.8	0.3	105	106
Gorringe Park Primary School	60%	2%	1.9	-0.7	2.9	105	105
Harris Primary Academy Merton	58%	5%	-3.7	1.0	2.1	103	104
Haslemere Primary School	48%	4%	-0.7	-3.9	-0.1	106	106
Hatfeild Primary School	57%	2%	3.2	2.0	1.6	107	105
Hillcross Primary School	57%	20%	0.1	0.3	1.7	107	104
Hollymount School	77%	21%	1.1	-0.3	4.1	109	110
Holy Trinity CofE Primary School	65%	15%	1.4	-1.5	-0.1	109	106
Joseph Hood Primary School	61%	14%	1.9	0.9	1.9	106	106
Liberty Primary	55%	0%	-1.1	-1.5	0.3	102	102
Links Primary School	49%	0%	1.5	-0.8	2.8	105	105
Lonesome Primary School	68%	11%	-0.9	0.8	-1.4	109	106
Malmesbury Primary School	54%	2%	-0.2	1.8	0.6	106	105

<b>Merton Abbey Primary School</b>	67%	11%	-0.1	2.3	2.3	104	106
<b>Merton Park Primary School</b>	78%	9%	4.5	-1.3	0.3	112	107
<b>Morden Primary School</b>	53%	10%	-0.6	-1.5	0.1	104	104
<b>Park Academy</b>	79%	26%	1.6	2.7	2.0	108	108
<b>Pelham Primary School</b>	60%	5%	1.1	-4.1	-0.1	107	106
<b>Poplar Primary School</b>	66%	14%	2.9	0.6	4.8	108	109
<b>The Priory CofE School</b>	53%	7%	-0.9	1.6	-0.9	102	102
<b>Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School</b>	71%	11%	2.9	1.6	2.0	107	107
<b>The Sherwood School</b>	48%	14%	-0.7	2.1	0.4	102	102
<b>Singlegate Primary School</b>	69%	13%	0.8	0.2	0.6	109	108
<b>St John Fisher RC Primary School</b>	71%	19%	1.6	-0.6	2.1	108	108
<b>St Mark's Primary School</b>	70%	10%	2.0	0.9	3.9	107	108
<b>St Mary's Catholic Primary School</b>	80%	18%	2.7	0.0	1.5	110	109
<b>St Matthew's CofE Primary School</b>	85%	15%	2.9	1.8	4.5	110	110
<b>St Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School</b>	71%	6%	0.1	2.4	3.6	106	109
<b>St Teresa's Catholic Primary School</b>	77%	20%	0.0	0.2	2.4	109	110
<b>St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School</b>	62%	1%	3.1	1.6	3.3	105	105
<b>Stanford Primary School</b>	44%	0%	0.8	0.9	1.6	100	103
<b>West Wimbledon Primary School</b>	67%	95	0.6	1.8	1.2	107	107
<b>William Morris Primary School</b>	63%	8%	0.3	1.1	1.2	106	106
<b>Wimbledon Chase Primary School</b>	70%	11%	3.2	-0.7	3.7	109	109
<b>Wimbledon Park Primary School</b>	81%	15%	3.4	0.7	1.6	111	109

## Appendix E: Performance Tables KS4

DfE Performance Tables GCSE – Progress and attainment:

	Progress 8			Attainment 8 Score	% of pupils achieving English Baccalaureate at grade 4 in both English and maths/C or above in the remaining elements	% of pupils achieving English Baccalaureate at grade 5 in both English and maths/C or above in the remaining elements	% of pupils achieving Grade 4 or above in English & maths GCSEs (grades 9-4 - standard passes)	% of pupils achieving Grade 5 or above in English & maths GCSEs (grades 9-5 - strong passes)
	Progress score	lower 95% confidence interval for adjusted average	upper 95% confidence interval for adjusted average					
<b>Merton</b>	<b>0.59</b>	<b>0.52</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>52.2</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>55%</b>
<b>National (maintained schools)</b>	<b>-0.03</b>			<b>46.3</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>Secondary Schools</b>								
Harris Academy Merton	0.37	0.18	0.56	49.9	22%	16%	66%	45%
Harris Academy Morden	0.52	0.31	0.74	48.5	38%	27%	70%	48%
Raynes Park High School	-0.02	-0.24	0.19	42.9	19%	13%	59%	40%
Ricards Lodge High School	0.87	0.67	1.06	58.2	42%	32%	85%	67%
Rutlish School	0.91	0.72	1.10	58.8	37%	31%	84%	64%
St Mark's Church of England Academy	0.66	0.37	0.95	42.9	23%	14%	58%	35%
Ursuline High School Wimbledon	0.79	0.59	0.99	60.3	44%	34%	88%	67%
Wimbledon College	0.70	0.49	0.91	58.2	52%	38%	86%	68%
<b>Special Schools</b>								
Cricket Green School	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE
Melrose School	-3.03	-3.80	-2.26	10.3	0%	0%	7%	7%
Perseid School	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE

## Appendix F: Performance Tables KS5

### DfE Performance Tables Post 16 - Outcomes:

	A level performance at the end of 16 to 18				
	Average point score per A level entry		% of A level students achieving at least three levels at grades AAB or better, at least two of which are in facilitating subjects	Average point score in best 3 A level entries	
	Expressed as a Grade	Point Score		Expressed as a Grade	Point Score
<b>Merton</b>	<b>C+</b>	<b>34.53</b>	<b>14.3%</b>	<b>B-</b>	<b>35.07</b>
<b>National (state-funded schools and colleges)</b>	<b>C+</b>	<b>34.16</b>	<b>15.8%</b>	<b>C+</b>	<b>34.68</b>
<b>Secondary Schools</b>					
Harris Academy Merton	C	30.68	7.1%	C	31.13
Raynes Park High School	C+	33.13	23.1%	C	31.03
Ricards Lodge High School	B-	36.73	20.0%	B-	36.53
Rutlish School	B-	35.29	14.6%	B-	37.04
St Mark's Church of England Academy	B-	36.99	26.3%	B	39.82
Ursuline High School Wimbledon	C+	33.51	10.3%	C+	33.45
Wimbledon College	B-	35.65	16.5%	B-	36.32
<b>Sixth Form Centre/Consortia</b>					
RR6	B-	35.83	16.5%	B-	36.86

## Appendix G: Glossary of Acronyms

ADCS	Association of Directors of Children’s Services
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CME	Children Missing Education
CSC	Children’s Social Care
CLLF	Children, Lifelong Learning and Families
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DfE	Department for Education
ECT	Early Career Teacher
EHE	Elective Home Education
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
EIF	Education Inspection Framework
ELG	Early Learning Goal
EBacc	English Baccalaureate
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
EET	Education Employment and Training
EWS	Education Welfare Service
EXS	Working at the expected standard
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
EYFSP	Early Years Foundation Stage Profile
FSM	Free School Meals
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GDS	Working at greater depth within the expected standard
GLD	Good Level of Development
GPS	Grammar Punctuation and Spelling
HMI	His Majesty’s Inspector for Ofsted
K	In receipt of SEN Support
KS1/2/4	Key Stage 1/2/4
LA	Local Authority
MAT	Multi Academy Trust
MEP	Merton Education Partner
MLE	Merton Leader in Education
MSI	Merton School Improvement
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NELI	Nuffield Early Language Intervention
NLE	National Leader in Education
NLG	National Leader in Governance
NRPF	No Recourse to Public Funds
Ofsted	Office for standards in Education
PA	Persistent Absence
PEP	Personal Education Plan
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
PSED	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
PVI	Private, Voluntary and Independent (Early Years provision)
RPA	Raising the Participation Age
RSE	Relationships and Sex Education
SAO	School Attendance Order
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
SEND	Special Educational Needs or Disabilities
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SENDAP	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, and Alternative Provision
SENDIS	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Integrated Service
SENIF	Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund
SWLSEP	South West London School Effectiveness Partnership
TA	Teaching Assistant
TAMHS	Targeted Mental Health in Schools
VBS	Virtual Behaviour Service
YOT	Youth Offending Team

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## Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Panel

**Date: January 2024**

**Subject: Child Healthy Weight Programme Update (21/2/2024)**

Lead officer: Mike McHugh, Consultant in Public Health

Lead member(s): Cllr Brenda Fraser, Cabinet Member Children Life Long Learning and Families and Cllr Peter McCabe, Cabinet Member Adult Social Care, Integrated Care and Public Health

Contact officer: Rachel Tilford – Senior Public Health Principal

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### Recommendations

- A. Panel to note the latest National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) data and trends for Merton, London and England
  - B. Panel to consider how all Council services can contribute to the Systems Wide approaches to reducing obesity and to reducing inequalities relating to overweight and obesity
  - C. Panel to consider progress made on addressing child healthy weight since the last report to Scrutiny in November 2022 and opportunities for further action.
- 

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on Merton's childhood overweight and obesity rates and trends including how these compare to London and England; highlight inequalities in overweight and obesity and report on progress delivering the Child Healthy Weight Action plan since the last report to Scrutiny in November 2022
- 1.2 Our collective efforts to reduce childhood obesity are essential because obesity increases the risk of developing a range of health conditions in childhood and later life including: diabetes, heart disease; stroke; high blood pressure; and some cancers.<sup>1</sup> Obese children are also much more likely to be obese adults,<sup>2</sup> Obesity can also have an impact on mental health and stigma associated with obesity can lead to disordered eating, avoidance of physical activity and avoidance of support.<sup>3</sup>
- 1.3 Obesity prevalence is highest among the most deprived groups with children resident in the most deprived parts of the country being more than twice as likely to be living with obesity than those in the least deprived areas.<sup>4</sup>
- 1.4 Whole systems approaches highlight the role that different Council functions can play in reducing the risk factors for overweight and obesity.<sup>5</sup>
- 1.5 There is no single solution to the high levels of child overweight and obesity, and it is vital to take a whole systems approach.<sup>6</sup> Whole systems approaches recognise the myriad of factors such as the physical environment, culture, behaviour, housing, poverty, food quality at home and at school, transport, fuel poverty, food knowledge, which have an impact on children's weight.

1.6 Merton’s Child Healthy Weight Action Plan recognises this complexity in its range of actions, acknowledging that targeted weight management programmes can only touch the tip of the iceberg.

## 2 Details

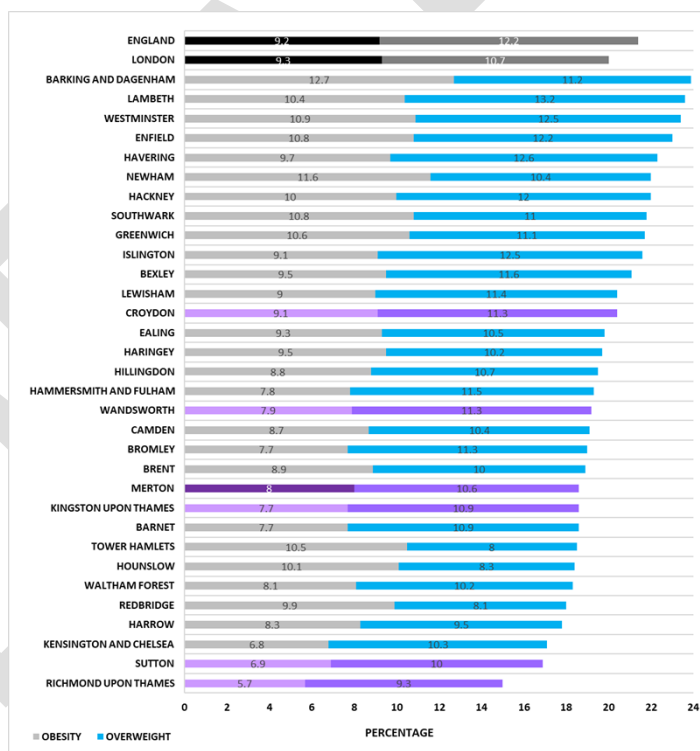
Latest data from the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP)

2.1 The NCMP is a universal national programme delivered in schools by school nursing services. Child weight is measured at two time points, reception and year 6.

2.2 The most recent data from 2022/2023 <sup>7</sup> shows Merton’s overweight and obesity rates are lower than the London average, but this does not mean that the rates are acceptable either for Merton as a whole and particularly for some areas of Merton.

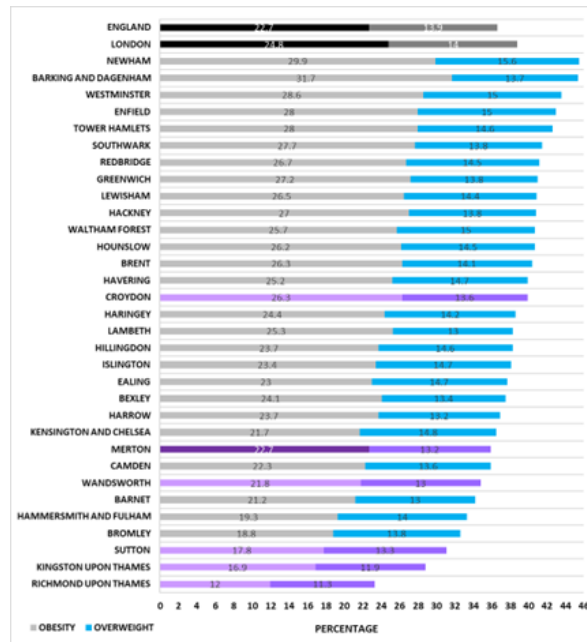
2.3 Figure 1 shows that in 2022/23 8% of Merton children in reception were obese, and a further 10.6% were overweight. The combined total of 18.6% is the 11th lowest rate of the 32 London boroughs, slightly lower than the London average of 20% and the England average of 21.4%. Merton’s obesity rate (8%) in reception children ranks 8<sup>th</sup> lowest of all London boroughs.

Figure 1 Percentage of reception aged children classified as obese and overweight 2022-23



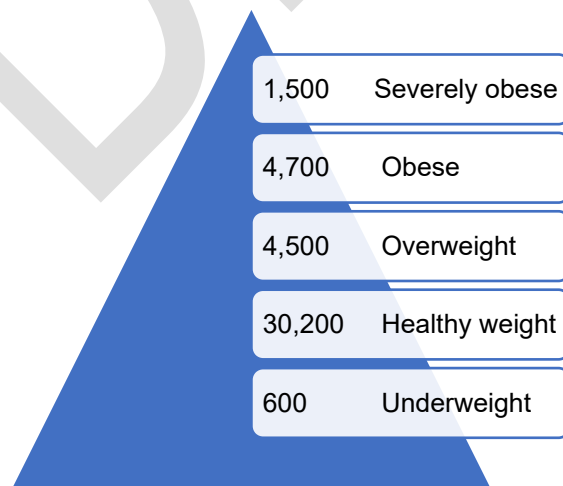
2.4 Figure 2 shows the corresponding data for Year 6. In 2022/2023 the percentage of Year 6 children who were obese was 22.7%, 14.7% higher than in reception, with a further 13.2% being overweight. The combined total of 35.9% is the 9th lowest rate of the 32 London boroughs, and lower than the London average of 38.8% and the England average of 36.6%. Whilst Merton’s obesity rate in year 6 children ranks 10<sup>th</sup> lowest of all London boroughs, it is worth noting that Merton’s reception and Year 6 obesity rates are the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest of the six South West London Boroughs, with only Croydon’s’ rates being higher.

Figure 2 Percentage of Year 6 aged children classified as obese and overweight 2022-23



- 2.5 Understanding what these percentages mean in terms of the numbers of children who are overweight and obese is important for informing our priorities. We have therefore used the 2022/2023 percentages to estimate the actual numbers of Merton children and young people between the ages of 4 and 18 who are living with overweight and obesity.
- 2.6 Figure 3 shows the estimated number of Merton children and young people aged between 4 and 18 in each weight category. These estimates are important because they help explain why targeted weight management services can only be the solution for a small number of children, young people and their families.
- 2.7 We have also estimated the number of children who may be underweight. These figures have remained fairly constant over time. <sup>8</sup>

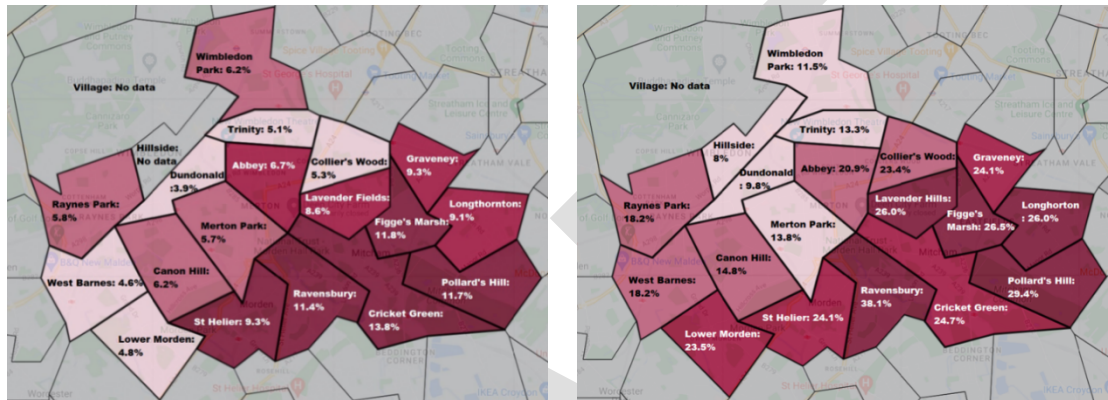
Figure 3 Estimated number of Merton children and young people aged 4 to 18 at each weight category



## Inequalities

2.1 In the update to Scrutiny in November 2022, we highlighted that obesity rates vary across Merton, with wards in the east of the Borough having the highest rates. This trend continues with the latest data. Figure 5 shows the obesity rates in year 6 for Merton’s wards for the 3 years 2020 to 2023. The maps are colour coded by quartile benchmarked to the Merton average. It is worth noting that while the wards in the east of the Borough have the highest rates, 13 of Merton’s 20 wards have obesity rates of over 18% in Year 6.

Figure 5 Maps of obesity rates across Merton wards in reception and Year 6 - 3 years combined 2020/2023



2.2 Of significant concern both locally and nationally is the difference between the overweight and obesity rates in reception and year 6. Figure 5 shows the difference between reception and year 6 for Merton wards (2020-2021 2022-2023) from 5.3% in Wimbledon Park to 21.4% in Ravensbury.

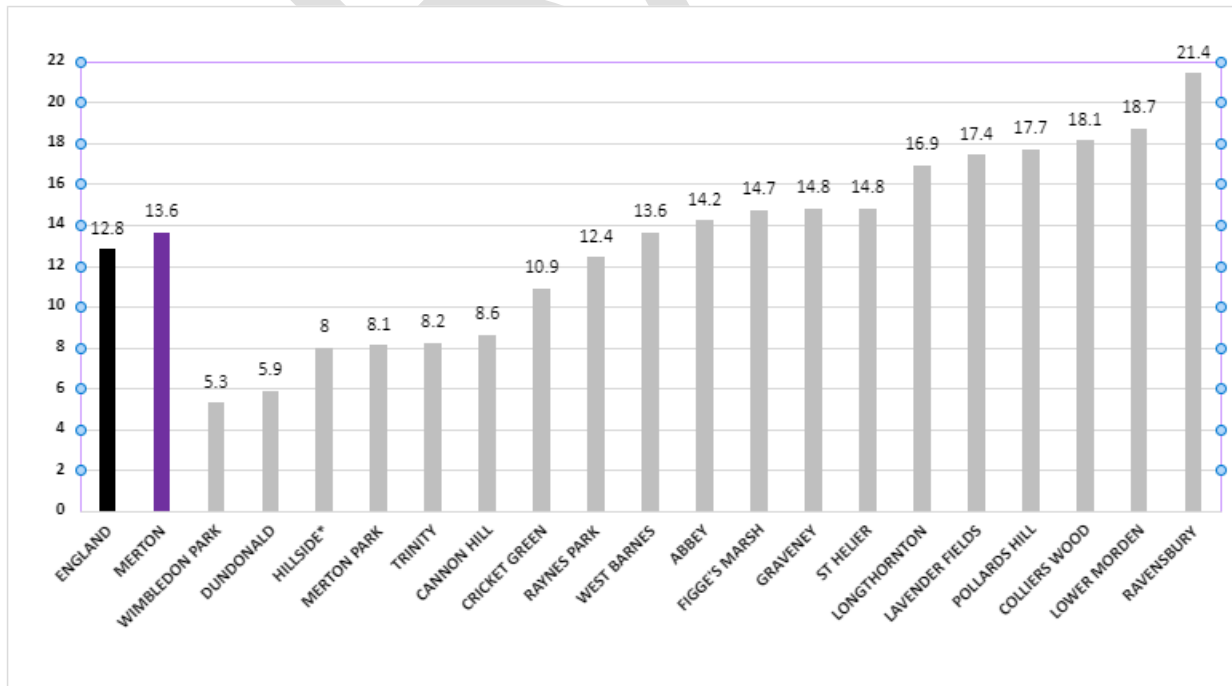
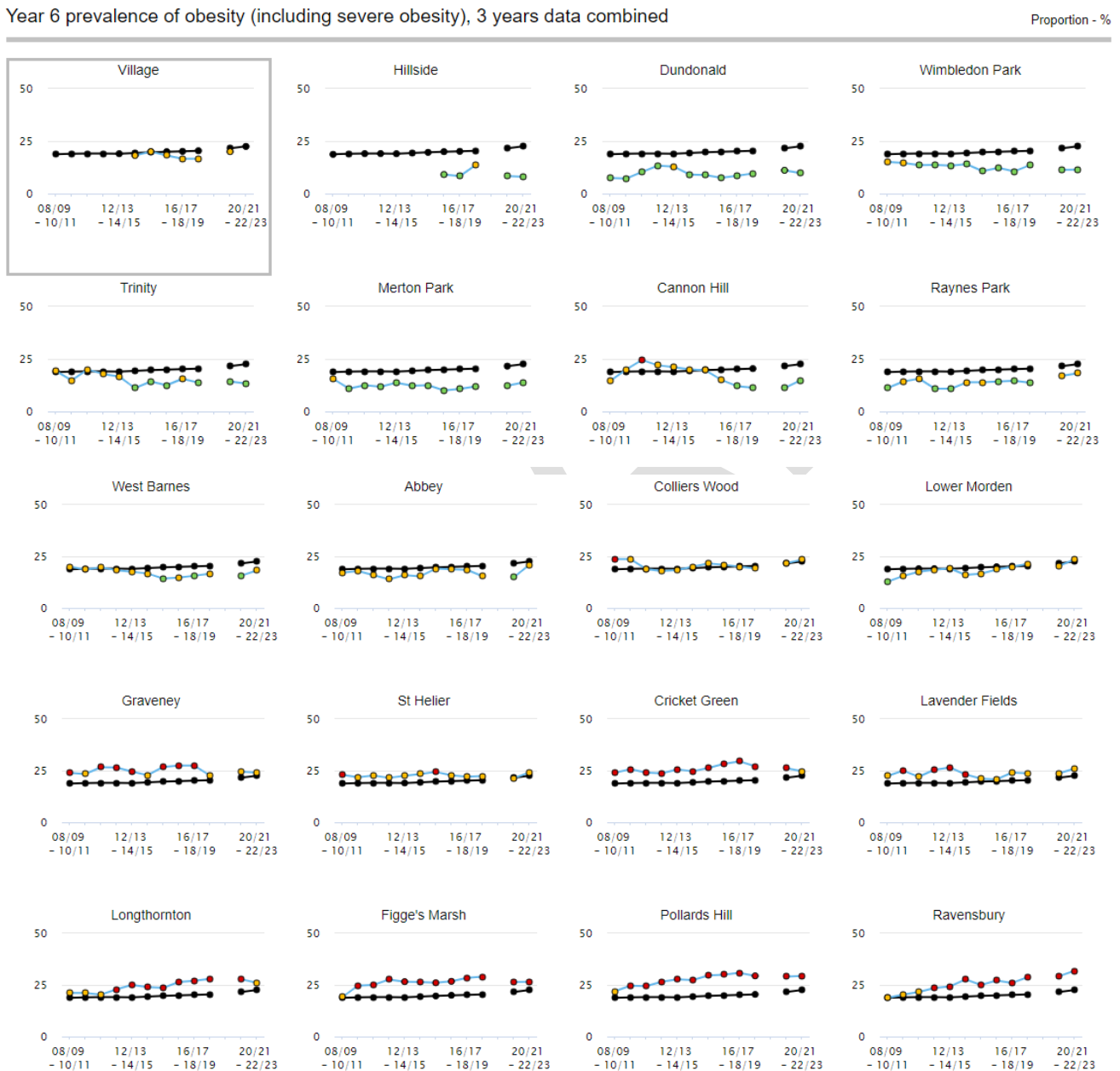


Figure 4 Difference in obesity prevalence (%) between reception and year 6 by ward

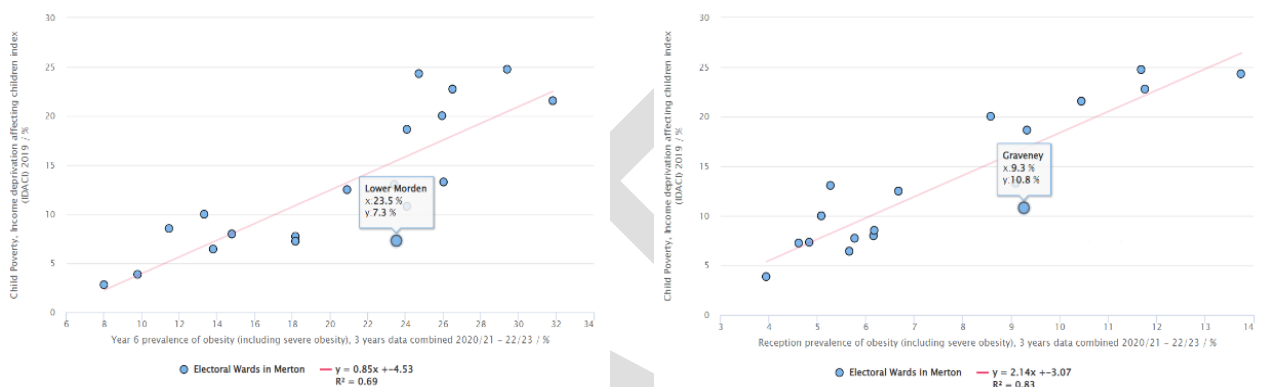
2.3 Figure 6 shows the ward level trends over time compared to the London average. There is always a need for caution when looking at data involving small numbers, but a general observation is that there are few wards experiencing a consistent positive change over time.

Figure 6. Ward level obesity rates over time



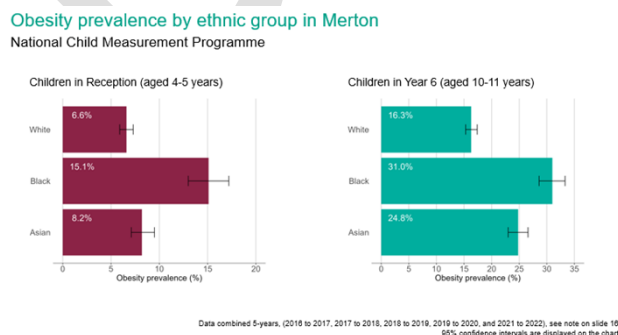
2.4 The relationship between deprivation and obesity at ward level in Merton is illustrated by Figure 7 & 8 which shows the IDACI (child poverty) levels for the three years 2020-2023 in relation to the Year 6 and Reception obesity rates.<sup>9</sup> The wards with higher deprivation generally have higher obesity rates, however in both reception and year 6 there are wards which have higher obesity rates than expected considering the child deprivation rate, indicating another factor is at play. In reception Lower Morden is out outlier (higher obesity rate than expected in light of the IDACI score) and in Year 6 Graveney is the biggest outlier.

Figures 7 and 8 Relation between obesity rates and deprivation in reception and Year 6 – 3 years combined 2020-2023



2.5 Obesity rates vary significantly between ethnic groups. Figure 10 shows the combined rates over 5 years for white, black and Asian children in reception and year 6. Black children in Merton are almost twice as likely to be obese than white children. However, we need to use some caution when looking at the obesity rates for black and Asian children, because there is evidence which suggests that BMI underestimates Asian children’s obesity and overestimates black children’s obesity.<sup>10</sup> Solutions are being sought for this at a national level. In addition, what this figure does not convey is the role played by deprivation and therefore we also need to recognise the higher deprivation levels experienced by Asian and black children<sup>11</sup>.

Figure 10 Obesity Prevalence by ethnic group in Merton



### 3 Impact of the cost-of-living crisis

- 3.1 The rising costs of fuel, food and other essentials are combining with existing disadvantage and vulnerability and putting many households at greater risk of both immediate hardship and reduced wellbeing.
- 3.2 Food poverty is a driver of poor physical and mental health, including chronic diet-related conditions such as obesity and cardio-vascular disease. Families experiencing food poverty often have to rely on cheap, poor quality food and less fruit and vegetables, which means that child hunger and obesity often co-exist<sup>12</sup>.
- 3.3 For children, food insecurity can limit development and affect the ability to concentrate and engage in school, impacting their educational attainment and long-term life chances<sup>13</sup>. Nationally, emerging evidence on the impact of cost-of-living increases shows that families are cutting back particularly on fruit and vegetables replacing these with “filling” foods that offer better value per calories and pre-processed food that avoid using gas stoves to prepare.<sup>14</sup>

### 4 What are we doing in Merton to improve child healthy weight?

- 4.1 As highlighted in the introduction the causes of obesity are complex and the actions to tackle it and increase the numbers of children who maintain a healthy weight should reflect this. By employing a system wide approach, we increase the likelihood of making a difference. We also need to be very mindful of minimising the stigma associated with weight management approaches <sup>15</sup>
- 4.2 Merton’s Child Healthy Weight Action Plan recognises the need to take a system perspective with universal and targeted actions grouped under three themes.

**Theme 1: Making Child Healthy Weight Everyone’s Business – universal actions**

**Theme 2: Supporting Children, Young People and their Families**

**Theme 3: Healthy Place**

Table 1: Progress against the three themes in the Child Healthy Weight Action plan

Theme	Action area	January 2024 update
<b>Making child healthy weight everyone’s business</b>	Healthy Schools London and Healthy Early Years London	<u>Healthy Schools</u> 52 schools in Merton have registered for the Healthy Schools London programme 22 - Bronze award, 12 – Silver award 3 – Gold award <u>Healthy Early Years London</u> 54 - First Steps 11 - Bronze (21 working towards) (4 of the 11 require renewal) 3 – Silver 3 (1 working towards) 1 - Gold
	Daily Mile Merton Sports Award	31 schools in Merton undertake a daily/active mile programme as part of their school's physical activity programme (in addition to PE curriculum) and 35 schools meet the CMO Active 30:30 target.
	Staff training about healthy weight	117 staff from a broad range of sectors including Health, Education, Social Care, Holiday Activities and Food Provision and the VCS took part in training about having conversations about weight.

Theme	Action area	January 2024 update
		Participants confidence in raising the issue of weight rose from 5/10 before the training, to 8.8/10 afterwards
	London Sport Active Lives Survey	There has been a significant increase in the numbers of schools and pupils who have completed Sport London's Active Lives Survey in the autumn term of 2023. Merton School Sports Partnership have been instrumental in driving up this increase. The data will enable us/schools to target physical activity programmes and support more effectively.
<b>Supporting children, young people and their families</b>	Healthy Start Vouchers	During 2023 a range of actions were undertaken to increase uptake of Healthy Start, this included awareness raising sessions with staff from across the Borough – health visitors, early years staff, VCS colleagues, primary care. Presentations were also made to the Family Hubs Start for Life group and Food Response Network. Healthy Start uptake rate increased from 54% to 69% between January and December 2023.
	Food Poverty Action Plan	A successful bid was made in July 2023 to the GLA Food Roots 2 funding to recruit a Strategic Lead for Food, Food Poverty and Cost of Living. This is a one-year post. A key objective of the role is to further increase uptake of Healthy Start.
	Family Weight Management	School Nurses deliver the 'Family Start' programme, a weight management support service for children and their families to achieve healthy lifestyle and reduce their weight (particularly those identified through the National Child Measurement Programme). More children will be eligible for referral for further support from the CYP Social Prescribing service from January 2024.
	Infant Feeding	The Health Visiting service provides a range of support to parents with feeding their babies. A new addition during 2023 has been the recruitment of peer supporters. The service is working to submit its application for the UNICEF Baby Friendly Gold award. The Children's Centres also registered in 2023 to start their UNICEF accreditation journey <sup>16</sup>
	Holiday Activities and Food Programme	The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme provides healthy food and activity for children in receipt of free school meals and those identified by schools as in need.  In 2023 1,868 children participated in HAF programmes over the summer holidays.
	Free School Meals (FSM)	Since April 2023 all primary school children have been eligible for FSMs part of the London Mayor's programme. This has now been extended for a further year.
	Physical Activity	Beat the Streets 2023– 8000 0- to 18-year-olds and 47 primary schools took part in the Beat the Streets Campaign
	Supporting 13-18 years olds with their weight – CYP Social Prescribing	The Children and Young People's Social Prescribing pilot has supported 153 children since it started in October 2022. The eligibility criteria for the programme are weight and emotional wellbeing issues. The pilot started in the East Merton PCN and expanded to Morden PCN in August 2023. Having successfully bid for additional funds from the SWLondon Inequalities Fund the service is being extended to the North PCN from April 2024



Theme	Action area	January 2024 update
	Supporting very obese children	A new Complications of Excess Weight clinic at St. George's hospital has started seeing children in January 2024. The clinical lead presented to the January meeting of the Child Healthy Weight Steering group.
<b>Healthy place - shaping the places we live, learn, work and play and influencing choices on the food we eat</b>	Climate Strategy and Action Plan	Merton's Climate Strategy and Action Plan contributes to tackling child healthy weight, committing to active travel and increasing and protecting existing vegetation like trees, including the school streets programme (adopted by 30 schools <sup>17</sup> ), which has the benefit of both reducing air pollution and promoting physical activity.
	The London Mayor's planning guidance	Boroughs are required to implement the 2021 London Plan's restriction on new take-aways within 400 metres of primary and secondary schools. <sup>18</sup> No submission for new takeaways within 400 metres of schools were made in 2023.
	Reducing unhealthy advertising	Merton is one of 4 London Boroughs to have successfully introduced a Healthier Advertising Policy.
	School Superzones	The Healthy Places Officer has successfully bid for 3 GLA superzone grants which are tackling different aspects of Place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing active travel to school</li> <li>• Creating safer access to greenspace across the road from primary schools</li> <li>• Increasing safety in car park neighbouring a school</li> </ul>

	Healthy Catering Commitment	The Tri-borough healthy catering commitment officer has made progress in 2023 to sign up businesses to the Healthy Catering Commitment
	Cooking well on a budget	Ready Steady Cook classes focused on cooking well on a budget are currently running in Mitcham at Pollards Hill and St. Mark's Church Wimbledon; funded by Civic Pride. Launched in September 2023, numbers have been gradually increasing.
	Borough of Sport	Good progress is being made with the Borough of Sport ambition, which aims to get more people aged 4-16 more Active. We have recently introduced permanent u16's free swims at times in all 3 leisure centres. We are also working on other 'exemplar' projects such as Park Play which will provide free weekly intergenerational play opportunities at several parks in the borough starting in Spring 2024. More information as to where to find activities within your local area can be found here <a href="#">Merton - Get Active</a>

## 5 Future plans and opportunities

- 5.1 The national guides to implementing systems wide approaches to reducing obesity cover the types of work we should be doing as a council and wider partnership to promote environments, behaviours, approaches which help CYP stay a healthy weight.<sup>19</sup> One example is implementing a 'Health in All Policy' approach which provides 'a useful framework for tackling complex health issues and embedding health in the work of all partners'<sup>20</sup>

Current actions to address inequalities in child healthy weight will continue and, we will seek out opportunities to strengthen our approach in 2024. We will also continue to include the Young Inspectors in these discussions. Priorities for 2024 include:

- Increase the uptake of Healthy Start through the work of the new Strategic Lead for Food, Food partnerships and Food poverty (GLA funded 1 year post)
- Implement the refreshed Merton Food Poverty Action Plan
- Further develop and implement the Child Healthy weight communications' plan as part of the Public Health team's and other colleagues communications plans
- Work with the new Strategic lead for Food, Food partnerships and food poverty to develop more sustainable approaches to supporting those experiencing food insecurity such as cash first and wraparound models
- Bring together the requirements within the SW London Infant feeding strategy, UNICEF Going for Gold and Family Hubs Infant Feeding strategy to create an integrated Borough plan for infant feeding, including becoming a breastfeeding friendly borough
- Analyse the results from the Active Lives survey to understand trends and attitudes towards physical activity amongst CYP
- Use the extension of the SWL inequalities funding for the CYP Social Prescribing pilot until December 2024 to implement recommendations from the independent evaluation report of the CYP social prescribing programme
- Develop the case for a Merton Tier 3 service / work with South West London ICB on the development of a CYP Tier 3 weight management service
- Undertake detailed analysis into the different in obesity rates between reception and Year 6, including a review of the evidence base for what works in primary school. This will be used to inform bids when opportunities arise
- Review breakfast club provision in the Borough, including an assessment of the offer against the School Food Standards<sup>21</sup> This will be used to inform bids /business cases.
- Review and widen the membership of the Child Healthy Weight Steering Group

## 5.2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

5.2.1 N/A

5.3 Consultation undertaken or proposed.

5.3.1 Stakeholder engagement via the child healthy weight steering group.

5.4 Timetable

5.4.1 Timetable for work is as per the Child Healthy Weight Action Plan deadlines.

## 5.5 Financial, resource and property implications

5.5.1 The Child Healthy Weight Action Plan is being implemented within existing resources of all partners.

5.5.2 Tackling childhood obesity is a complex challenge that is shared by public health, the wider council, and external partners. Each partner contributes its time, expertise and influence to varying degrees e.g., Public Health through its existing resources commissions health visiting and school nursing, both of which work to influence the determinants of healthy weight through engaging with children, parents and schools and supporting those who are obese.

5.6 Legal and statutory implications

5.6.1 N/A

5.7 Human rights, equalities and community cohesion implications

5.7.1 Inequalities are detailed in the main report above.

5.8 Crime and Disorder implications

5.8.1 N/A

5.9 Risk management and health and safety implications

5.9.1 N/A

5.10 Appendices – the following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report

5.10.1 N/A

5.11 Background papers

- [The Impact of Covid19 on young people in Merton - Final.pdf](#)
- [every child a healthy weight.pdf \(london.gov.uk\)](#)

## References

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<sup>1</sup> [Healthy weight – RCPCH – State of Child Health](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Childhood obesity: applying All Our Health - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/eclinm/article/PIIS2589-5370\(22\)00138-9/fulltext#seccesectitle0010](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/eclinm/article/PIIS2589-5370(22)00138-9/fulltext#seccesectitle0010)

<sup>4</sup> [Obesity Profile - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> [How can local authorities reduce obesity? - NIHR Evidence](#)

- <sup>6</sup> [Whole systems approach to obesity: A guide to support local approaches \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- <sup>7</sup> [Obesity Profile - Data - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)](https://phe.org.uk)
- <sup>8</sup> [Obesity Profile - Data - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)](https://phe.org.uk)
- <sup>9</sup> [Local health, public health data for small geographic areas - Data - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)](https://phe.org.uk)
- <sup>10</sup> Hudda MT, Nightingale CM, Donin AS, Fewtrell MS, Haroun D, Lum S, et al. Body mass index adjustments to increase the validity of body fatness assessment in UK black African and south Asian children. *Int J Obes.* 2017;41(7):1048–55.
- <sup>10</sup> St. Pierre C, Ver Ploeg M, Dietz WH, Pryor S, Jakazi CS, Layman E, Noymer D, Coughtry-Davenport T, Satchek JM. Food insecurity and childhood obesity: A systematic review. *Pediatrics.* 2022 Jul 1;150(1):e2021055571.
- <sup>11</sup> [Child poverty and education outcomes by ethnicity - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)
- <sup>12</sup> St. Pierre C, Ver Ploeg M, Dietz WH, Pryor S, Jakazi CS, Layman E, Noymer D, Coughtry-Davenport T, Satchek JM. Food insecurity and childhood obesity: A systematic review. *Pediatrics.* 2022 Jul 1;150(1):e2021055571.
- <sup>13</sup> Marmot M. Health equity in England: the Marmot review 10 years on. *Bmj.* 2020 Feb 25;368.
- <sup>14</sup> [https://foodfoundation.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-03/TFF\\_Cost%20of%20living%20briefing.pdf](https://foodfoundation.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-03/TFF_Cost%20of%20living%20briefing.pdf)
- <sup>15</sup> [Pervasiveness, impact and implications of weight stigma \(thelancet.com\)](https://thelancet.com)
- <sup>16</sup> [The Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative](#)
- <sup>17</sup> [School streets \(school safety zones\) | Merton Council](#)
- <sup>18</sup> [the\\_london\\_plan\\_2021.pdf](#)
- <sup>19</sup> [Promoting healthy weight in children, young people and families: A resource to support local authorities \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- <sup>20</sup> [Promoting healthy weight in children, young people and families: A resource to support local authorities \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- <sup>21</sup> [School food standards practical guide - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

## Appendices

Figure 13 Reception and Year 6 data for overweight and obesity compared to England average (data from OHID fingertips)

Indicator	Period	Merton			Region England			London		
		Recent Trend	Count	Value	Value	Value	Worst	Range	Best	
Reception prevalence of obesity (including severe obesity), 3 years data combined	2020/21 - 22/23	-	-	7.9%	10.0%	9.7%	13.5%			
Reception prevalence of overweight (including obesity), 3 years data combined	2020/21 - 22/23	-	-	18.1%	21.1%	22.1%	25.8%			
Year 6 prevalence of obesity (including severe obesity), 3 years data combined	2020/21 - 22/23	-	-	21.5%	24.8%	22.5%	31.4%			
Year 6 prevalence of overweight (including obesity), 3 years data combined	2020/21 - 22/23	-	-	35.2%	39.2%	36.6%	46.3%			

Figure 14 Reception and Year 6 data for overweight and obesity compared to England average (data from OHID fingertips)

Indicator	Period	Merton			Region England			England		
		Recent Trend	Count	Value	Value	Value	Worst	Range	Best	
Reception prevalence of obesity (including severe obesity), 3 years data combined	2020/21 - 22/23	-	-	7.9%	10.0%	9.7%	13.6%			
Reception prevalence of overweight (including obesity), 3 years data combined	2020/21 - 22/23	-	-	18.1%	21.1%	22.1%	28.7%			
Year 6 prevalence of obesity (including severe obesity), 3 years data combined	2020/21 - 22/23	-	-	21.5%	24.8%	22.5%	31.4%			
Year 6 prevalence of overweight (including obesity), 3 years data combined	2020/21 - 22/23	-	-	35.2%	39.2%	36.6%	46.3%			

Figure 15 Percentage of reception children classified as obese 2022-2023

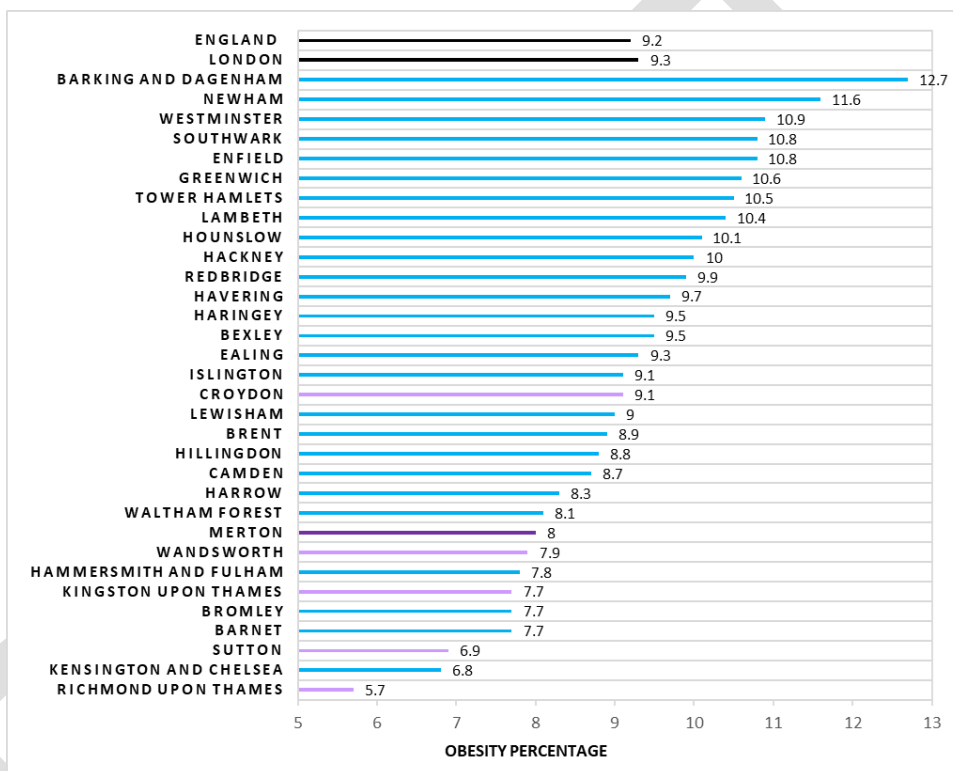
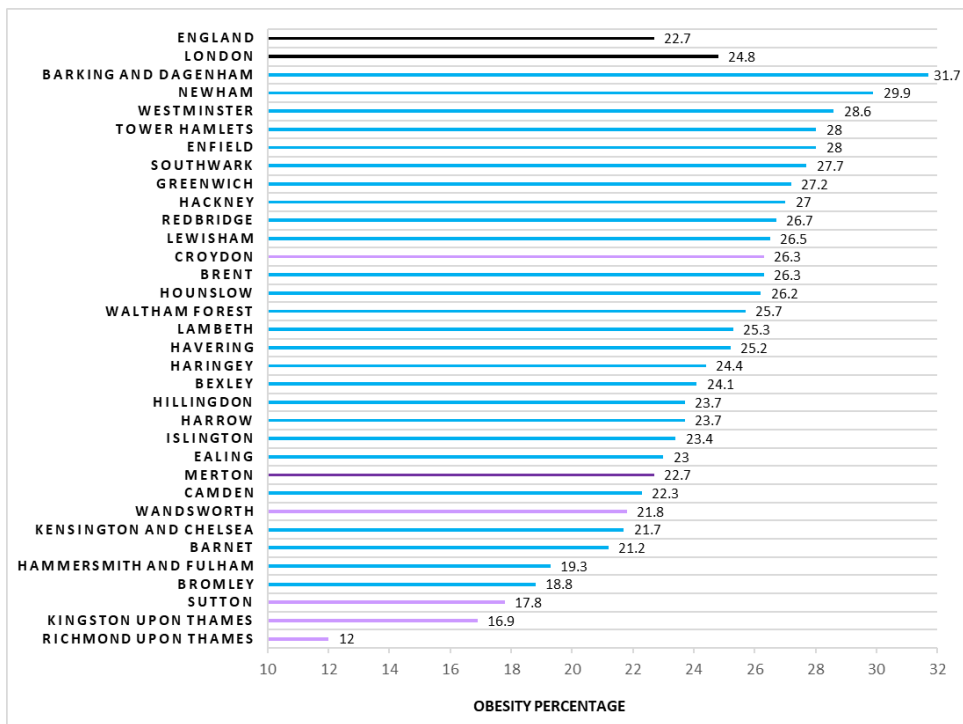


Figure 16 Percentage of year 6 children classified as obese 2022-2023



DRAFT

## Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

**Date: 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

Wards: All

### Subject: Performance Report

Lead officer: Jane McSherry, Executive Director of Children, Lifelong Learning and Families

Lead member(s): Cllr Brenda Fraser, Cabinet Member Children’s Services, and Cllr Sally Kenny, Cabinet Member Education and Lifelong Learning

Contact officer: Tim Wallder, Interim Head of Performance, Improvement and Partnerships

#### Recommendations:

- A. Members of the panel to discuss and comment on the contents of the report

#### 1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report summarises the performance information for 2023/24, up to 31st January 2023, as set out in the accompanying document, the Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel Performance Index 2023/24.

#### 2 DETAILS

##### *Exception Report*

- 2.1. The following indicators are marked as amber or red.

No	Indicator	Rating	Service Commentary
8	% of children subject of a CP plan who had a CP visit within timescales in the month	R	This indicator is Red as performance as of November was 88% compared to our target of 90%. This has continued on an upward trajectory from the last performance report.
14	% of Looked After Children cases which were reviewed within required timescales	A	Performance on this indicator is now back up to 95% which is just below the target of 96%. The service continues to closely monitor progress.
22	% of total 0-5 year estimated Census 2011 population from areas of deprivation (IDACI 30%) whose families have accessed children's	R	The previous 2 years data has been adjusted to reflect the current measure and give a more accurate comparator.  This target is RAG rated Red as performance is at 58% against the target of 65%. Current performance

	centre services (cumulative)		shows an improvement compared to this time last year.
27	Reception year surplus places	R	The indicator is currently RAG rated as Red with the surplus is in reception places at 14% against a target of 5-10%. This has increase from 9.8% because it now has data for the 2023/24 school year and demand for places has fallen without the corresponding fall in admission numbers. Officers have negotiated a number of schools to reduce PAN from 2024/25
28	Secondary school surplus places	R	The indicator remains RAG rated Red. There has been a slight increase from the previous report.
33b	% of care leavers (aged 19-21) not in education, employment or training (NEET) and Unknown	A	The indicator is currently RAG rated Red as performance is at 38% compared to a 32% target. 6% cannot be in EET for valid reasons. Merton's current performance continues to be better than the 40% London and 44% England benchmark.

## Commentary

*Indicator 13: Average number of weeks taken to complete Care proceedings against a national target of 26 weeks*

- 2.2. Nationally, the duration of care proceedings has increased. This is a result of court closures during the pandemic.
- 2.3. A range of influences impact on the duration of court proceedings – some of which are outside of the authority's immediate control. These include court availability, the availability and timeliness of expert witness input, and the desire to engage effectively with the wider family network to explore alternatives (where appropriate and safe to do so).
- 2.4. The service has monthly court and PLO tracking meetings including legal representatives. On a quarterly basis, representatives from the Children and Families Court Advisory Services (Cafcass) attend. These meetings allow the authority to raise concerns about timeliness. A permanent court progression officer is now in place with positive anecdotal feedback on her impact.
- 2.5. Merton continues to receive positive feedback from Merton's link judge on the Council's PLO work.

## 3 AMENDMENTS, CORRECTIONS AND DATA CAVEATS

### Amendments, Corrections and Data Caveats



3.1. We are currently unable to report against the following indicators:

No	Indicator	Service Commentary
6	% of quorate attendance at CPP conferences	Following amendments to the system workflow, as part of the Mosaic Repair Project, a report has now been built to extract this data and we are currently in the process of user acceptance testing.
29	Youth services participation rate	This data is no longer collected nationally, and the indicator is on hold until new guidance is published later this year.

**Appendices** – the following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel Performance Index 2023/24.

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# Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel - Performance Index 2023/24

				Benchmarking																
No.	Performance Indicators	Frequency	Target 2023/24	2022/23	England	London	Year	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
<b>Assessments</b>																				
1	Number of Early Help Assessments undertaken by the Authority	Monthly	Not a target measure	165	Unavailable	Unavailable	21/22	5	16	9	24	22	18	14	13	12	6	16	10	
							22/23	6	8	15	11	14	12	13	21	19	12	19	10	
							23/24	17	22	12	17	10	7	18	21	24	34			
2	% of Single Assessments authorised within the statutory 45 days	Monthly	91%	96.8%	82.5% (DfE 2022/23)	85.4% (DfE 2022/23)	21/22	97%	92%	85%	66%	87%	85%	93%	94%	90%	99%	94%	90%	
							22/23	91%	94%	92%	97%	94%	94%	94%	93%	89%	82%	90%	96%	
							23/24	97%	99%	91%	98%	95%	93%	93%	95%	84%	94%			
3a	% of Education, Health and Care (EHCP) Plans issued within statutory 20 week timescale (Monthly)	Monthly	65%	81% (2022 calendar year)	50.7% (DfE: SEN2 Jan 2023 for the 2022 calendar year)	54.7% (DfE: SEN2 Jan 2023 for the 2022 calendar year)	21/22	62%	56%	74%	42%	79%	87%	100%	76%	100%	100%	100%	78%	
							22/23	67%	67%	67%	60%	95%	82%	92%	92%	100%	100%	69%	56%	
							23/24	74%	41%	64%	38%	62%	61%	41%	29%	53%	100%			
3b	% of Education, Health and Care (EHCP) Plans issued within statutory 20 week timescale (YTD Calendar Year)	YTD	65%	81% (2022 calendar year)	50.7% (DfE: SEN2 Jan 2023 for the 2022 calendar year)	54.7% (DfE: SEN2 Jan 2023 for the 2022 calendar year)	21/22	63%	61%	64%	61%	63%	66%	68%	69%	71%	100%	100%	89%	
							22/23	81%	76%	75%	71%	77%	77%	79%	80%	81%	100%	79%	69%	
							23/24	70%	63%	63%	59%	59%	60%	58%	56%	55%	100%			
<b>Child Protection</b>																				
4	Rate of Child Protection Plans started per 10,000 children aged 0-17 (Monthly)	Monthly	Not a target measure	43.2	54.3 (DfE 2022/23)	48.8 (DfE 2022/23)	21/22	37.1	36.3	32.5	30	30.8	27.8	28.1	26.8	24.9	22	22	34.8	
							22/23	21.2	24.1	23.3	21.6	24.7	25.3	26.4	25.3	26.6	27	31.6	34.8	
							23/24	35.4	33.5	35.2	34.6	33.9	32.7	33.5	33.1	34.8	34.2			
5	Number of children subject of a Child Protection Plan - as at end of month	Monthly	Not a target measure	158	Unavailable	Unavailable	21/22	176	172	154	142	146	132	133	127	119	105	105	166	
							22/23	101	115	111	103	118	121	126	121	126	129	151	166	
							23/24	169	160	168	165	162	156	160	158	152	145			
6	% of quorate attendance at child protection conferences	Quarterly	95%	N/A	Unavailable	Unavailable	21/22			N/A		N/A		N/A		N/A			N/A	
							22/23			N/A		N/A		N/A		N/A		N/A		N/A
							23/24			N/A		N/A		N/A		N/A		N/A		N/A
7	% of reviews completed within timescale for Children with Child Protection Plans	Monthly	95%	100%	88.1% (DfE 2022/23)	91.6% (DfE 2022/23)	21/22	100%	97%	95%	94%	95%	98%	100%	100%	97%	100%	100%	98%	
							22/23	98%	94%	95%	96%	97%	98%	98%	98%	94%	91%	95%	96%	
							23/24	92%	88%	88%	95%	94%	99%	97%	99%	98%	99%			
8	% of Children subject of a CP Plan who had a CP visit within timescales in the month	Monthly	90%	96%	Unavailable	82% (Q2 D2I dataset 2023/24)	21/22	97%	97%	95%	93%	99%	91%	89%	96%	82%	90%	94%	96%	
							22/23	94%	86%	90%	91%	88%	95%	90%	93%	91%	94%	87%	93%	
							23/24	90%	88%	86%	84%	76%	90%	82%	86%	88%	88%			
9a	% of Children that became the subject of a Child Protection Plan for the second or subsequent time (within 2 years)	Monthly	<20%	NEW indicator	11.2% (EOY D2I dataset 2022/23)	10% (Q2 D2I dataset 2023/24)	21/22													
							22/23													
							23/24	17%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	11%	0%	0%		
9b	% of Children subject of a Child Protection Plan for the second or subsequent time (Ever)	Monthly	<20%	25.1%	23.6% (DfE 2022/23)	19.8% (DfE 2022/23)	21/22	16%	14%	16%	13%	14%	14%	13%	12%	11%	12%	14%	25%	
							22/23	14%	19%	24%	24%	25%	24%	25%	25%	24%	28%	26%	25%	
							23/24	26%	22%	23%	23%	22%	21%	19%	20%	20%	20%			
<b>Looked After Children</b>																				
10	Rate of Children looked-after per 10,000 children aged 0-17 (snapshot) (Monthly)	Monthly	Not a target measure	26	70.5 (DfE 2022/23)	51.2 (DfE 2022/23)	21/22	30	30.6	31	30.6	30	29.7	29.1	28.9	27.6	26.4	26.4	25.6	
							22/23	26.4	26.2	25.1	25.6	25.8	25.8	25.3	26.2	25.3	25.8	26	25.6	
							23/24	26	26.2	26.8	27	27.6	27	27.9	29.1	31.6	30.0			
11	Number of Looked After Children as at end of month	Monthly	Not a target measure	123	Unavailable	Unavailable	21/22	142	145	147	145	142	141	138	137	132	126	126	122	
							22/23	126	125	120	122	123	123	121	125	121	123	124	122	
							23/24	124	125	128	129	132	129	129	139	137	143			
12	Number of UASC children and young people	Monthly	48 (Agreed Quota)	26	No benchmarking available	No benchmarking available	21/22	23	21	20	19	19	22	22	23	23	18	19	19	
							22/23	19	19	19	20	19	23	22	22	23	22	24	25	
							23/24	26	26	28	27	26	28	25	27	26	25			

		Benchmarking																		
No.	Performance Indicators	Frequency	Target 2022/23	2022/23	England	London	Year	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
13	Average number of weeks taken to complete Care proceedings against a national target of 26 weeks	Quarterly	26 weeks	53	44 (CAFCASS Avg Q1 2023/24)	Unavailable	21/22 22/23 23/24			42 57 38			69 64 59			39 25 50			41 52	
14	% of Looked After Children cases which were reviewed within required timescales	Monthly	96%	94%	Unavailable	95% (Q4 2022/23)	21/22 22/23 23/24	99% 94% 85%	96% 94% 90%	94% 96% 48%	94% 96% 87%	97% 98% 86%	96% 96% 100%	96% 97% 95%	96% 98% 96%	98% 97% 92%	98% 99% 95%	97% 98% 98%	94% 94%	
15	% of Looked After Children participating in their reviews in month (excludes children aged 0 - 4)	Monthly	Not a target measure	92%	Unavailable	Unavailable	21/22 22/23 23/24	94% 100% 90%	88% 80% 80%	91% 93% 100%	100% 92% 100%	83% 91% 75%	73% 100% 88%	88% 100% 95%	86% 100% 100%	90% 74% 100%	94% 100% 100%	100% 77% 100%	87% 100%	
16	Stability of placements of Looked After Children - number of placements (3 or more in the year)	Quarterly	9%	7%	10% (DfE 2022/23)	10% (DfE 2022/23)	21/22 22/23 23/24			14.9% 7.5% 4.7%			12.7% 7.3% 7.0%			11.4% 5.8% 7.4%			10.3% 6.6%	
17	Stability of placements of Looked After Children (aged under 16) - length of placement (in care 2.5 years, placement 2 years)	Quarterly	71%	70%	Unavailable	61% (Q2 D2I dataset 2023/24)	21/22 22/23 23/24			48% 66% 63%			64% 71% 68%			70% 71% 74%			68% 70%	
18	% of Looked After Children in foster placements who are placed with in-house foster carers	Quarterly	60%	59%	Unavailable	Unavailable	21/22 22/23 23/24			63% 57% 61%			58% 61% 62%			62% 60% 64%			67% 61%	
19	Number of in-house foster carers recruited	Quarterly	2 per quarter	6	Unavailable	Unavailable	21/22 22/23 23/24			1 1 4			2 2 6			2 1 2			2 2	
20	Number of Looked After Children who were adopted (YTD)	Monthly	Not a target measure	3	Unavailable	Unavailable	21/22 22/23 23/24	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 2 0	0 2 0	1 2 0	2 2 0	3 3 0	3 3 0	3 3 0	3 3 0	3 3 0	3 3 3	
21	Number of Looked After Children for whom agency Special Guardianship Orders were granted (YTD)	Quarterly	Not a target measure	1	Unavailable	Unavailable	21/22 22/23 23/24			0 0 2			1 0 2			0 1 2			1 1	
Childrens Centres and Schools																				
22	% of total 0-5 year estimated Census 2011 population from areas of deprivation (IDACI 30%) whose families have accessed children's centre services (cumulative)	Annual	65%	47%	Unavailable	Unavailable	21/22 22/23 23/24			49% 81% 85%			39% 49% 66%			34% 52% 58%			32% 47%	
23	% outcome of School Ofsted inspections good or outstanding (overall effectiveness)	Quarterly	95%	95%	87% (30/04/2022)	94% (30/04/2022)	21/22 22/23 23/24			95% 95% 95%			95% 95% 97%			95% 95% N/A			95% 95%	
24	Number of Primary* permanent exclusions (Number YTD Academic year)	Monthly	Not a target measure	0	4.9% (National exclusion statistics for AY 2019/20)	0.8% (National exclusion statistics for AY 2019/20)	21/22 22/23 23/24	<5 0 0	<5 0 0	<5 0 0	<5 0 0	N/A N/A N/A	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	
25	Number of Secondary* permanent exclusions (Number YTD Academic year)	Monthly	Not a target measure	19	28.5% (National exclusion statistics for AY 2019/20)	14.6% (National exclusion statistics for AY 2019/20)	21/22 22/23 23/24	<5 5 19	5 6 21	13 7 22	13 7 22	N/A N/A N/A	1 1 2	2 4 2	2 9 4	3 11 4	3 12 6	3 16 6	5 19	
26	Persistent absenteeism - All Schools (10% or more sessions missed)	Annual	21%	NEW indicator	22.3% (DfE AY Aut-Spr 2021/22)	18.8% (DfE AY Aut-Spr 2021/22)	21/22 22/23 23/24													19.3% 19.2%
27	% of Reception year surplus places*** (calculated October and January)	Quarterly	5-10%	9.8%	Unavailable	Unavailable	21/22 22/23 23/24			8.7% 11.6% 9.8%			11.1% 11.6% 9.8%			10.8% 9.7% 14.3%			11.6% 9.8%	

No.	Performance Indicators	Frequency	Target 2022/23	Benchmarking						Year	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
				2022/23 (Provisional)	England	London																	
<b>Young People and Services</b>																							
28	% of Secondary school (Year 7) surplus places *** (calculated October and January)	Quarterly	5-10%	2.3%	Unavailable	Unavailable	21/22			5.6%					5.6%			3.0%			3.2%		
							22/23			3.2%					3.2%				2.4%				2.3%
							23/24			● 2.3%				● 2.3%					● 2.5%				
29	Youth service participation rate	Annual	Not a target measure	N/A	Unavailable	Unavailable	21/22														0%		
							22/23																0%
							23/24																
29	% of CYP (16 - 17 year olds) not in education, employment or training (NEET)	Monthly	1.2%	1.1%	2.6% (2021/22)	1.5% (2021/22)	21/22	1.3%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.6%	1.4%	0.9%	1.3%	1.1%	1.1%	1.0%	1.0%				
							22/23	1.0%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	1.2%	0.6%	1.1%	1.5%	1.2%	1.2%	1.1%	1.1%				
							23/24	● 1.1%	● 1.1%	● 1.2%	● 1.3%	● 1.4%	● 1.1%	● 1.5%	● 2.0%	● 1.7%	● 1.7%						
30	% of CYP (16 - 17 year olds) education, employment or training status 'not known'	Monthly	Not a target measure	2.1%	2.2% (2021/22)	1.9% (2021/22)	21/22	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.6%	1.1%	12.8%	2.2%	1.2%	1.1%	0.9%	0.9%				
							22/23	1.2%	1.4%	1.2%	1.5%	1.5%	No Data	11.3%	2.6%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.8%				
							23/24	0.8%	1.4%	1.3%	1.2%	1.5%	n/a	11.9%	1.6%	0.8%	0.6%						
31	Number of First Time Entrants (FTEs) to the Youth Justice System aged 10-17 (cumulative)	Monthly	50	23	144 (rate per 100,000, 2022)	N/A	21/22	3	4	8	10	13	14	16	18	20	23	24	28				
							22/23	0	2	4	5	8	10	11	12	17	18	23					
							23/24	1	2	3	8	12	14	17	21	22	22						
32	Rate of proven re-offending by young people in the youth justice system - quarterly	Quarterly	41.8%	33% (Provisional Annual)	31.2% (2021/2022 pub) YJB	41.8% (2020/2021 YJB pub)	21/22			45.50%			45.50%			40.00%			52.90%				
							22/23			27.30%			28.60%			53.80%		38.10%					
							23/24			● 22.2%			● 22.2%			● 21.2%							
33a	% of care leavers (aged 19-21) in suitable accommodation	Monthly	95%	92%	88% (DfE 2022/23)	88% (DfE 2022/23)	21/22	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%			
							22/23	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%				
							23/24	● 94%	● 95%	● 94%	● 93%	● 96%	● 95%	● 93%	● 93%	● 92%	● 95%						
33b	% of care leavers (aged 19-21) not in education, employment or training (NEET) and Unknown	Monthly	32%	33%	44% (DfE 2022/23)	40% (DfE 2022/23)	21/22	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%			
							22/23	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%					
							23/24	● 38%	● 36%	● 35%	● 37%	● 40%	● 41%	● 38%	● 33%	● 36%	● 38%						
34	% agency social workers (HR data)	Quarterly	22.7%	26%	17.1% (DfE Census Sept 2022)	24.3% (DfE Census Sept 2022)	21/22			28%			37%			35%			34%				
							22/23			34%			36%			29%		26%					
							23/24			● 25%			● 22%			● 21%							
35	Average total caseload for social workers (working with looked after children and/or children subject of child protection plans) (total caseload including non LAC and CPP cases as at end of month)	Monthly	Not a target measure	14	16.6 (DfE Census Sept 2022)	14.5 (DfE Census Sept 2022)	21/22	14	15	13	12	12	13	13	13	13	12	13	13				
							22/23	14	15	14	13	14	12	13	11	10	11	13	14				
							23/24	15	15	15	16	15	15	15	14	14	14						

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