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# Merton Council

## Children and Young People

### Overview and Scrutiny

### Panel



Date: 13 March 2023

Time: 7.15 pm

Venue: Council chamber - Merton Civic Centre, London Road, Morden SM4 5DX

#### AGENDA

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## Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel membership

### Councillors:

Usaama Kaweesa (Chair)  
Chessie Flack (Vice-Chair)  
Michael Butcher  
Caroline Charles  
Jil Hall  
Billy Hayes  
Andrew Howard  
Linda Kirby MBE  
Samantha MacArthur  
James Williscroft

### Co-opted Representatives

Mansoor Ahmad, Parent Governor  
Representative Secondary and Special  
Sectors  
Roz Cordner, Church of England Diocese  
Becky Cruise, Parent Governor  
Representative  
Dr Oona Stannard, Catholic Diocese

### Substitute Members:

Max Austin  
Sheri-Ann Bhim  
Jenifer Gould  
Edith Macauley MBE  
Robert Page

### Note on declarations of interest

Members are advised to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting. If a pecuniary interest is declared they should withdraw from the meeting room during the whole of the consideration of that matter and must not participate in any vote on that matter. For further advice please speak with the Managing Director, South London Legal Partnership.

### What is Overview and Scrutiny?

Overview and Scrutiny describes the way Merton's scrutiny councillors hold the Council's Executive (the Cabinet) to account to make sure that they take the right decisions for the Borough. Scrutiny panels also carry out reviews of Council services or issues to identify ways the Council can improve or develop new policy to meet the needs of local people. From May 2008, the Overview & Scrutiny Commission and Panels have been restructured and the Panels renamed to reflect the Local Area Agreement strategic themes.

Scrutiny's work falls into four broad areas:

- ⇒ **Call-in:** If three (non-executive) councillors feel that a decision made by the Cabinet is inappropriate they can 'call the decision in' after it has been made to prevent the decision taking immediate effect. They can then interview the Cabinet Member or Council Officers and make recommendations to the decision-maker suggesting improvements.
- ⇒ **Policy Reviews:** The panels carry out detailed, evidence-based assessments of Council services or issues that affect the lives of local people. At the end of the review the panels issue a report setting out their findings and recommendations for improvement and present it to Cabinet and other partner agencies. During the reviews, panels will gather information, evidence and opinions from Council officers, external bodies and organisations and members of the public to help them understand the key issues relating to the review topic.
- ⇒ **One-Off Reviews:** Panels often want to have a quick, one-off review of a topic and will ask Council officers to come and speak to them about a particular service or issue before making recommendations to the Cabinet.
- ⇒ **Scrutiny of Council Documents:** Panels also examine key Council documents, such as the budget, the Business Plan and the Best Value Performance Plan.

Scrutiny panels need the help of local people, partners and community groups to make sure that Merton delivers effective services. If you think there is something that scrutiny should look at, or have views on current reviews being carried out by scrutiny, let us know.

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# Agenda Item 2

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## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

8 FEBRUARY 2023

(7.15 pm - 8.55 pm)

PRESENT: Councillors Councillor Usaama Kaweesa (in the Chair), Councillor Chessie Flack, Councillor Michael Butcher, Councillor Caroline Charles, Councillor Jil Hall, Councillor Billy Hayes, Councillor Andrew Howard, Councillor Linda Kirby, Councillor Samantha MacArthur, Councillor James Williscroft, Mansoor Ahmad, Roz Cordner, Cruise and Dr Stannard

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Brenda Fraser and Sally Kenny

Stella Akintan (Scrutiny Officer), Dheeraj Chibber (Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Youth Inclusion), Richard Ellis (Interim Assistant Director for Strategy, Commissioning and Transformation), Elizabeth Fitzpatrick (Assistant Director for Education and Early Help) and Jane McSherry (Executive Director of Children, Lifelong Learning and Families)

### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

There were no apologies for absence

### 2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of pecuniary interests

### 3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed

### 4 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH (Agenda Item 4)

Panel members thanked officers for an excellent report and expressed gratitude that Merton is doing extensive work to improve children's mental health.

A panel member asked what is being done to prevent mental health issues from occurring and if the programme is reliant on self-referrals. The Assistant Director of Education and Early Help said there is the Mental Health in School's Forum, staff are skilled and empowered to support mental health. Professionals make referrals to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

A panel member asked if information about reasons for referral can identify key challenges which can then support prevention. The Assistant Director of Education

and Early Help said the key presenting issues support discussions in the CAMHS Partnership Board.

Panel members said Merton work on mental health is a credit to the borough. It was asked if there is data tracking on ethnicity, sexuality and what further information should be captured. The Assistant Director for Education and Early Help said she will check if further contextual information is available.

In response to questions the Assistant Director for Education and Early Help reported that;

Merton is the leading authority for waiting times for CAMHS access as first contact was 6.9 days, the next local authority is 28 days. This is due to Merton's additional work on the single point of access.

It is too early to report on the impact of the cost-of-living crisis but anecdotally there is concern.

The Department are not aware of any proactive work in schools to support those whose gender identity may be triggering mental health issues.

A panel member noted there are lower rates of self-referrals for male clients. The Assistant Director of Education and Early Help said Rutlish and Wimbledon College are boys schools and looking at how we engage with this cohort and why they may be less forthcoming.

A panel member asked how the challenge recruiting therapists is being addressed and how good practice from Merton is being shared. The Assistant Director for Education and Early Help said she will report back on the shortfall in therapists and work undertaken by the Integrated Care Board to share good practice.

#### RESOLVED

The Chair thanked officers for all their work on the service.

The Department to report back on:

What demographical information is recorded for mental health referrals.

If there is a shortfall in therapists and how this is being tackled

Work undertaken by the Integrated Care Board to share good practice on Mental referrals.

#### 5 TASK GROUP PROGRESS - VERBAL UPDATES (Agenda Item 5)

Task Group Chairs gave an overview of the work undertaken so far.

Councillor Linda Kirby reported that the task group has attended the Secondary Heads meeting, met with Head of Education Inclusion and produced a survey for schools and spoken to Healthwatch. The task group will also attend the schools mental health forum.

#### Youth Finding Task Group

Councillor Max Austin reported that the task group will focus on increasing access to funding for youth services. The Youth Partnership Foundation role is to pool different organisations to attract funding and is the preferred model for officers and the voluntary sector. The task group has met with Merton Youth Service and voluntary sector colleagues, as a next step will meet with other local authorities who have youth services different models and how successful they have been.

A panel member asked why the Youth Partnership Model was rejected in the past, Councillor Austin said it was thought that it could lead competition within the partnership and now organisations concerns have been addressed and are in unanimous support of the model.

#### Resolved

The Chair thanked the Councillors for their updates and looked forward to receiving their draft reports in due course.

## 6 DEPARTMENTAL UPDATE REPORT (Agenda Item 6)

The Executive Director of Children, Lifelong Learning and Families gave an overview of the six pillars within the Children's Social Care Implementation Strategy which was published on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February. Further detail will be brought back to a future panel meeting for discussion.

A Panel member congratulated Wimbledon Park for their outstanding rating from Ofsted and asked for an update on Hatfield School which was rated requires improvement. Panel members wished to understand if this would impact on their expansion plans. The Assistant Director of Education and Early Help said Hatfield has moved from 'Good' to 'Requires Improvement'. There is a school improvement strategy in line with need. The expansion of the Additionally Resourced Provision for pupils with special educational needs has started and will continue.

A panel member asked about for more information about the new special free school which was recently approved. The Assistant Director for Strategy Commissioning and Transformation said there are 120 places planned and that work continues with the Department for Education on site options and will report back in due course.

A Panel member asked if cooking lessons are included for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) in the Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF). The Assistant Director of Education and Early Help said there are cooking lessons with HAF and will check if this includes children with SEND.

A panel member sought clarification about consultation plans for family hubs. The Assistant Director of Education and Early Help said there will be consultations with communities. Also, parents will be involved in the governance of the programme.

Councillor Sally Kenny, Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong learning said 95% of Merton schools are rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted and are aiming for this to become 100%. The Department are also working to ensure pupils with special

educational needs are able to be educated in Merton where possible, Whatley Avenue has opened for 40 children, this keeps costs down and creates a better environment but some complex residential care may have to be provided out of borough. The Cabinet Member agreed that home economics in schools is important.

**RESOLVED**

Department to investigate if cooking classes are available for children with SEND on the HAF Programme.

7 WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda Item 7)

The work programme was noted.



# Corporate Parenting

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What does it mean to be a Corporate Parent in Merton?  
March 2023

# Contents

- What is Corporate Parenting?
- Who has Corporate Parenting responsibilities?
- Corporate Parenting at Merton – our strategy
- Corporate Parenting at Merton – making it happen
- Corporate Parenting in Practice
- Your Role as Corporate Parent

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# What is Corporate Parenting?

- Our legislative responsibility under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 means that for any child or young person who comes into our care, we need to act as their corporate parent. This means that as a local authority we should:
  - Act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people.
  - Encourage them to express their views, wishes and feelings, and take them into account, while promoting high aspirations and trying to secure the best outcomes for them.
  - Make sure they have access to services
  - Make sure they are safe, with stable home lives, relationships and education or work
  - Prepare them for adulthood and independent living.

# Who has corporate parenting responsibilities?

- Everyone who is elected to serve on, or is employed by, a council **shares a collective responsibility** towards children in care and young people with care experience.
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017 sets out three levels of responsibility.
  - Universal
  - Targeted
  - Specialist
- Children Act 2004 includes a duty to promote cooperation between agencies and corporate parenting a *‘task [that] must be shared by the whole local authority and partner agencies’*.

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# Corporate Parenting at Merton – Our Strategy

Merton's [Corporate Parenting Strategy 2019-22](#) sets out our pledges to children and young people in and leaving care in Merton. This sits under our [Children and Young People's Plan \(2019-23\)](#), which sets out our ambitions for all CYP in Merton.

## Our pledge

- Your voice will be heard, what you say matters.
- You will have somewhere safe to call home.
- We will help you with your worries and fears.
- 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.
- We will make sure you have people in your life who are important to you and someone you can trust.
- 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.

# Corporate Parenting at Merton – Making it Happen

Merton's Corporate Parenting Board is Chaired by the Chief Executive of Merton Council and comprises of:

- ✓ Children in care and young people with care experience
- ✓ Participation Officers
- ✓ Senior officers from across the Council
- ✓ Partners representing education, health, housing, social care
- ✓ Elected members, including the Lead Member for Children, Schools and Families

The Corporate Parenting Board oversees the delivery of the action plan that sits under our Corporate Parenting Strategy.

# Corporate Parenting In Practice

## **Pledge 1: Your voice will be heard, what you say matters**

- ✓ Ensuring children in care council is represented at Corporate Parenting Board
- ✓ Commissioning Coram BAAF to undertake a consultation with Merton's children in care and care experienced young people.
- ✓ Young people with care experience on interview panels
- ✓ Development of a local offer for young people leaving care in Merton

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## **Pledge 2: You will have somewhere safe to call home**

- ✓ Reviewing children and young people in care who go missing or who are vulnerable to risk of exploitation
- ✓ Ensuring young people in education have stability by providing housing around term times
- ✓ Providing Setting Up Home Allowance in new tenancies

# Corporate Parenting In Practice

## **Pledge 3: We will help you with your worries and fears**

- ✓ Health passports for care experienced young people explaining their health history
- ✓ Early identification of young people transitioning to Adult Services
- ✓ Offering CAMHS consultation to care experienced young people, their social workers and personal advisors
- ✓ Named worker in Catch22 team to support our care experienced young people with drug screening and substance misuse intervention.

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## **Pledge 4: We will do the best we can for you, so you can do your best at school, have hobbies and interests and time for fun**

- ✓ Virtual School offering extensive educational support beyond statutory school age
- ✓ Named teacher to work with neighbouring colleges and universities so they understand the needs of our care experienced young people
- ✓ Specialist support for unaccompanied asylum seeking young people



# Corporate Parenting In Practice

## **Pledge 5: We will make sure you have people in your life who are important to you and someone you can trust**

- Support CYP to spend time with family members where it is safe to do so
- Plan for long term relationships
- Providing trusted adults in school
- Commission the Jigsaw4U befriending service to match adults to vulnerable children in care

## **Pledge 6: 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.**

- ✓ Extending Personal Advisor services up to the age of 25
- ✓ Offered independent workshops/income maximisation advice and support
- ✓ Helping foster carers to understand the needs of adolescents
- ✓ Supporting 'Staying Put' arrangements
- ✓ Exempted Merton's care experienced residents from Council Tax until the age of 25.

# Corporate Parenting - Your Role

- What do you see as your role as a Corporate Parent to Merton's children in care and young people with care experience?
- In your capacity as Corporate Parent – what will you do to improve outcomes for Merton's children in care and young people with care experience?

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

**Date: 13th March 2023**

Agenda item:

### **Subject: Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 21-22**

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

Lead member: Cllr Brenda Fraser, Cabinet Member Children's Services

Contact officer: David Michael, Head of Corporate Parenting

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#### **Recommendations:**

A. Members to note the contents of the report

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## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1. 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 in the reporting year April 2021 – March 2022.

## **2 DETAIL**

2.1. This report covers the reporting year April 2021 to March 2022 which follows an unprecedented period in living memory, with Covid-19, lockdowns, and the many challenges those brought. Children in care and care experienced young people are some of the most vulnerable and marginalised people in society. Such challenges and pressures on societies tend to have the biggest impact on our most vulnerable and push them further towards the fringes. It is our duty as corporate parents to minimise this impact and shield our corporate children and young people as much as possible, just as we would with children within our own family networks.

2.2. 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.

2.3. Highlights from the report are outlined below:

2.4. Despite the ongoing challenges around Covid-19, in this year, Merton's services for children looked after and care experienced young people was found to be 'Outstanding' by Ofsted in February 2022. Ofsted said of our services supporting children in care that 'teams of highly committed, ambitious and determined professionals work extremely well together to help children to remain safe and achieve in life.'

2.5. During this year, there was also a restructure across Children's Social Care and turnover in leadership with three Assistant Directors. Despite this, the newly formed Corporate Parenting Service, which united most corporate parenting operational functions into the one service, maintained strong succession planning with the internal promotions of our new permanent CEO, the Director of Children Services, and Assistant Director of Education. The commitment and high aspirations of senior managers and political leaders in Merton was also recognised by Ofsted.

2.6. The overall number of children in care decreased again, a pattern which was mirrored across other cohorts of children and contributable to Merton's practice model. However, we expect these numbers to stabilise moving forward due to consistency in the numbers of children entering care.

2.7. There was an increase in the average duration of court proceedings which was attributable to the back log experienced by the courts following the Covid-19 lockdowns.

2.8. The first constellation of the Mockingbird Family Model of Fostering was launched. It was a disappointing year for the recruitment of foster carers which was anecdotally experienced across other boroughs.

2.9. 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 was up-to-date review health assessments, dental checks, and strengths and difficulties questionnaire was good in comparison with other national and London Local Authorities.

2.10. 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 we have in education, training, and employment.

2.11. Merton's Children in Care council '*Our Voice*' was relaunched following the lockdowns and has continued to grow. Ofsted acknowledged our 'vibrant Young Inspectors team and... active Children in Care Council' which ensure that children's views influence decisions by elected members and senior officers. Corporate parenting across the council was recognised as a priority.

2.12. A Coram Voice *Bright Spots Survey* was commissioned and concluded at the end of the year. The response rate was high and the results will inform the next Corporate Parenting Strategy.

## **2 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

3.1 Not applicable

## **4 TIMETABLE**

4.1 Not applicable

## **5 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Not applicable

## **6 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Not applicable

## **7 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 Not applicable

## **8 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 Not applicable

**9 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Not applicable

**10 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT**

10.1 Corporate Parenting Annual Report 21-22.

**11 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 None

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# London Borough of Merton Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2021/2022

Issue Date	Authors	Date of the Next Review	Lead Officer
27/02/2023	David Michael	January 2024	Dheeraj Chibber

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## I. Executive Summary

This report covers the reporting year April 2021 to March 2022 which follows an unprecedented period in living memory, with Covid-19, lockdowns, and the many challenges those brought. Children in care and care experienced young people are some of the most vulnerable and marginalised people in society. Such challenges and pressures on societies tend to have the biggest impact on our most vulnerable and push them further towards the fringes. It is our duty as corporate parents to minimise this impact and shield our corporate children and young people as much as possible, just as we would with 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:

- Despite the ongoing challenges around Covid-19, in this year, Merton's services for children looked after and care experienced young people was found to be 'Outstanding' by Ofsted in February 2022. Ofsted said of our services supporting children in care that 'teams of highly committed, ambitious and determined professionals work extremely well together to help children to remain safe and achieve in life.'
- During this year, there was also a restructure across Children's Social Care and turnover in leadership with three Assistant Directors. Despite this, the newly formed Corporate Parenting Service, which united most corporate parenting operational functions into the one service, maintained strong succession planning with the internal promotions of our new permanent CEO, the Director of Children Services, and Assistant Director of Education. The commitment and high aspirations of senior managers and political leaders in Merton was also recognised by Ofsted.
- The overall number of children in care decreased again, a pattern which was mirrored across other cohorts of children and contributable to Merton's practice model. However, we expect these numbers to stabilise moving forward due to consistency in the numbers of children entering care.
- There was an increase in the average duration of court proceedings which was attributable to the back log experienced by the courts following the Covid-19 lockdowns.
- The first constellation of the Mockingbird Family Model of Fostering was launched. It was a disappointing year for the recruitment of foster carers which was anecdotally experienced across other boroughs. However, recruitment of foster carers is expected to be stronger next year.
- The percentage of children in care achieving the standard in Key Stage 2 for reading, writing and mathematics is well above the national and regional average.
- 16 care experienced young people attended university during the year with one achieving a master's degree.
- 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 in comparison with other national and London Local Authorities.
- 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 we have in education, training, and employment.

- Merton's Children in Care council 'Our Voice' was relaunched following the lockdowns and has continued to grow. Ofsted acknowledged our 'vibrant Young Inspectors team and... active Children in Care Council' which ensure that children's views influence decisions by elected members and senior officers. Corporate parenting across the council was recognised as a priority.
- A Coram Voice *Bright Spots Survey* was commissioned and concluded at the end of the year. The response rate was high and the results will inform the next Corporate Parenting Strategy.

## 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 2020/2021 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 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 at the time, Ged Curran, promoting a strong corporate parenting ethos across the Council and the wider children's partnership.

### Context

Following the disruption of the 2020/2021 caused by Covid-19 this reporting year could be seen as a recovery year as our children and young people, the workforce and wider society started to adapt to a new normal. However, childhood goes too quickly and progression must always be the focus of professionals working with children. Continuous improvement is a value held tightly within the Corporate Parenting service and more than ever, the workforce demonstrated this over this reporting period.

In the first quarter Hannah Doody was promoted from the Director of Housing to become our new permanent CEO following the retirement of the long serving Ged Curran. The quarter also saw the internal promotion of Jane McSherry from Assistant Director of Education to the Director of Children Services. El Mayhew left Merton employment and Sue Myers was employed on a locum basis and given the challenging task of seeing through the major restructure to Children

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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)

Social Care services for which staff consultation started just before the period of this report (29<sup>th</sup> of March 2021). The purpose of this restructure was to ensure that: services were aligned to best deliver services, there was enough management capacity to deliver quality practice, and there were clear career pathways for the workforce. Even though achieving savings was not a motivation for this restructure (and nor was it an outcome), any restructure can have a heavy impact on workforce anxiety and this was no exception, especially after the pandemic-stricken year of 2020/2021.

However, this was managed with compassion from managers and with a workforce who never take their eyes off meeting the needs of children and young people. The new structure came into effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September. Regarding children in care and care experienced young people, the main improvement was that the majority of services relating to them were merged into the new singular ‘Corporate Parenting’ service which continued under the leadership of David Michael (since January 2020). The 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter also saw Dheeraj Chibber come into post as the new permanent Assistant Director of Children’s Social Care. The service continued to work continuously in achieving the best possible outcomes for our children and young people and were rewarded when Ofsted visited in February 2022 and graded the experiences and progress of children in care and care experienced young people as ‘outstanding’. This was matched with ‘outstanding’ in ‘the impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families’ and, ‘good’ for experiences and progress of children who need help and protection’.

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

Merton’s pledges are outlined in our Corporate Parenting Strategy 2019-2022 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 2020-21

Table 1

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

	2018		2019		2020		2021		2022	
	Number	Rate/10K	Number	Rate/10K	Number	Rate/10K	Number	Rate/10K	Number	Rate/10K
<b>Merton</b>	155	33	159	34	154	32	142	30	122	26
<b>London</b>	9880	49	10020	50	10020	49	9640	47	9960	52
<b>National</b>	75370	64	78140	65	80000	67	80780	67	82170	70

Up until 2020, the numbers of children in care had remained stable between 150-160. Between 2020 and the end of this reporting year, the numbers had gradually decreased to 122 at the end of 2021/22. The pandemic contributed towards this drop with less unaccompanied asylum-seeking children entering care, but this drop also correlates 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. This trend is mirrored across other areas of children social care specifically the numbers of children subjected to Public Law Outline and Child Protection Plans. The table below show that the decrease from the previous reporting year is not due to less children entering care, which suggests that we could expect our numbers to start stabilising moving forward. 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. This assurance was also reinforced by Merton's 2021 positive Ofsted inspection.

Table 2

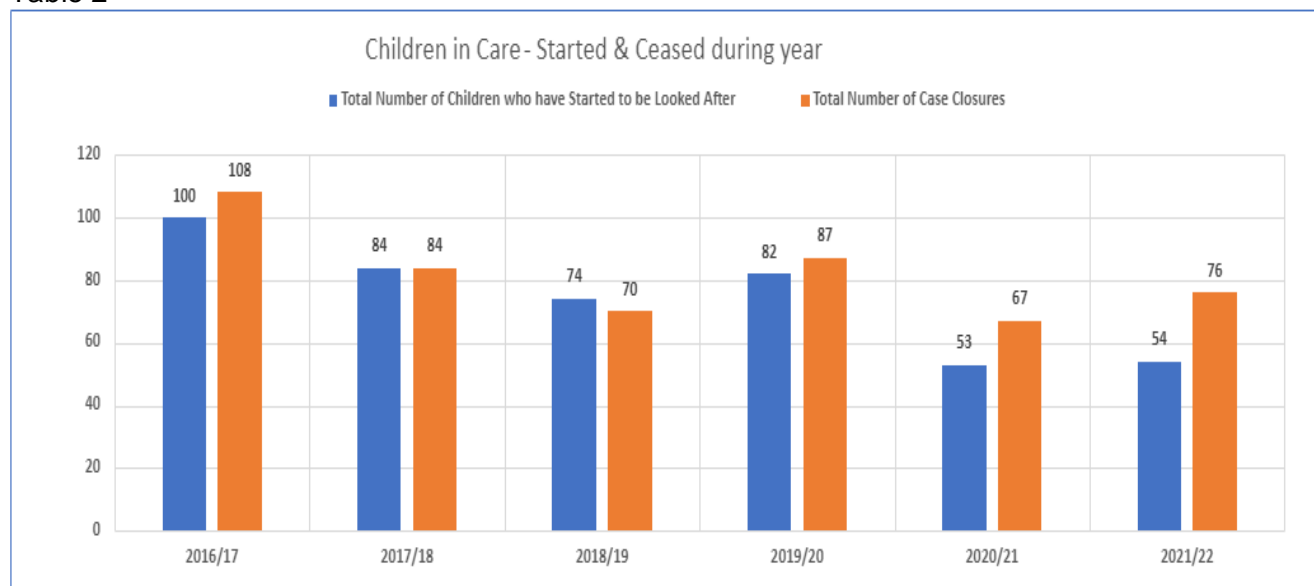
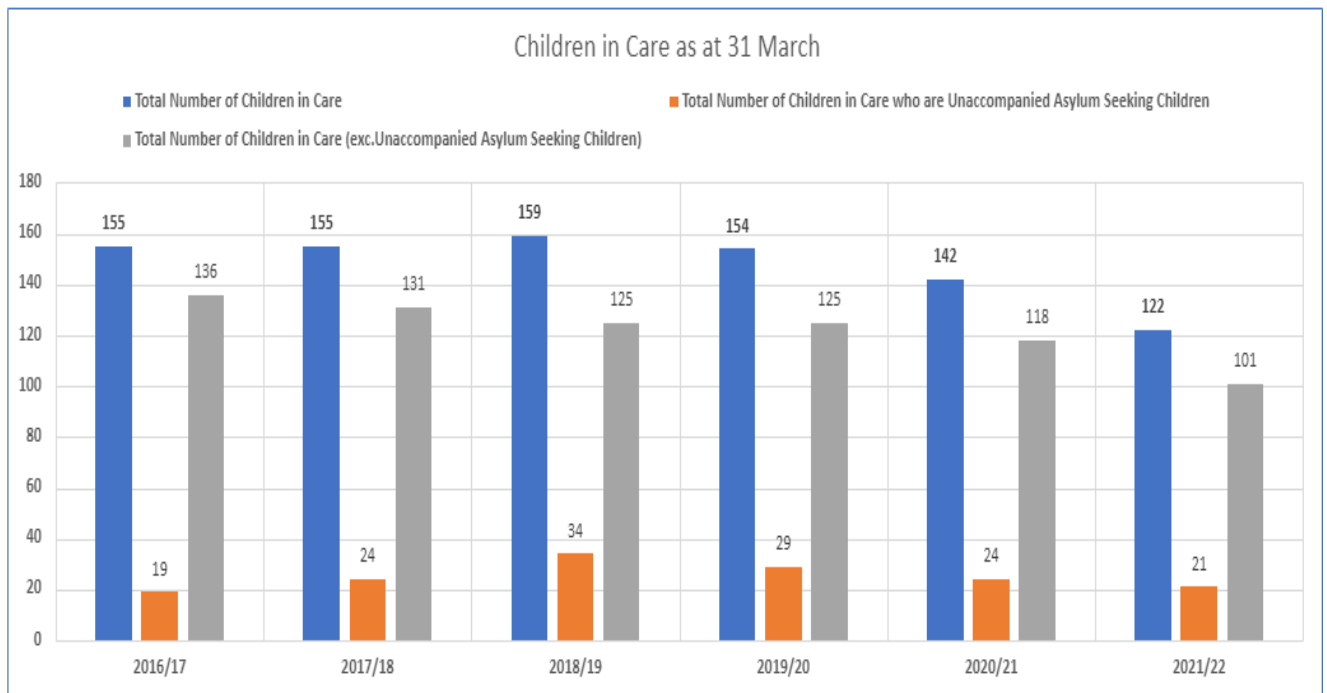


Table 3



The table above shows the numbers separating out the unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. Comparing the year with the highest number (2018/2019) to this current one, you can see the decrease has been shared out between both cohorts. Following the drop of asylum seekers during the pandemic, the National Transfer Scheme which ensures equitable distribution of asylum seekers across the country was made mandatory. This move by the Central Government has mitigated an expected increase in numbers due to the rising numbers of asylum seekers widely reported in the national press. This increase may see numbers rise in the future as Merton’s equitable quota of children we have agreed to take is 38 (based on 0.08% of the population).

Tables 1 shows the drop in Merton’s numbers of children in care per 10,000 children. This is against the trend nationally. In the previous 4 years, Merton had mirrored the London trend; however, this year saw a London increase contrary to what occurred in Merton (Table 1). Table 4 below compares Merton with our statistical neighbours. We are 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 Hillingdon 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 Trust for London on poverty shows that Merton has the lowest rates of poverty in London. We also have the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest number of people sleeping rough (as seen by outreach workers) and have fewer families housed in temporary accommodation than the London average. However, pertinently, we are about average specifically regarding child poverty<sup>4</sup>.

Table 4

<sup>4</sup> [Merton.pdf \(fra1.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com\)](https://fra1.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com/Merton.pdf)

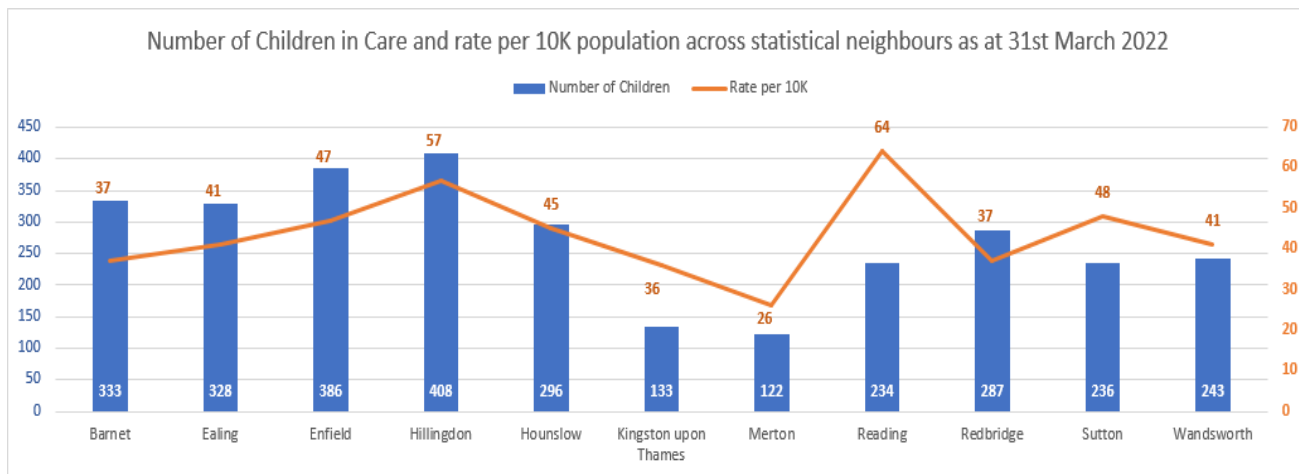
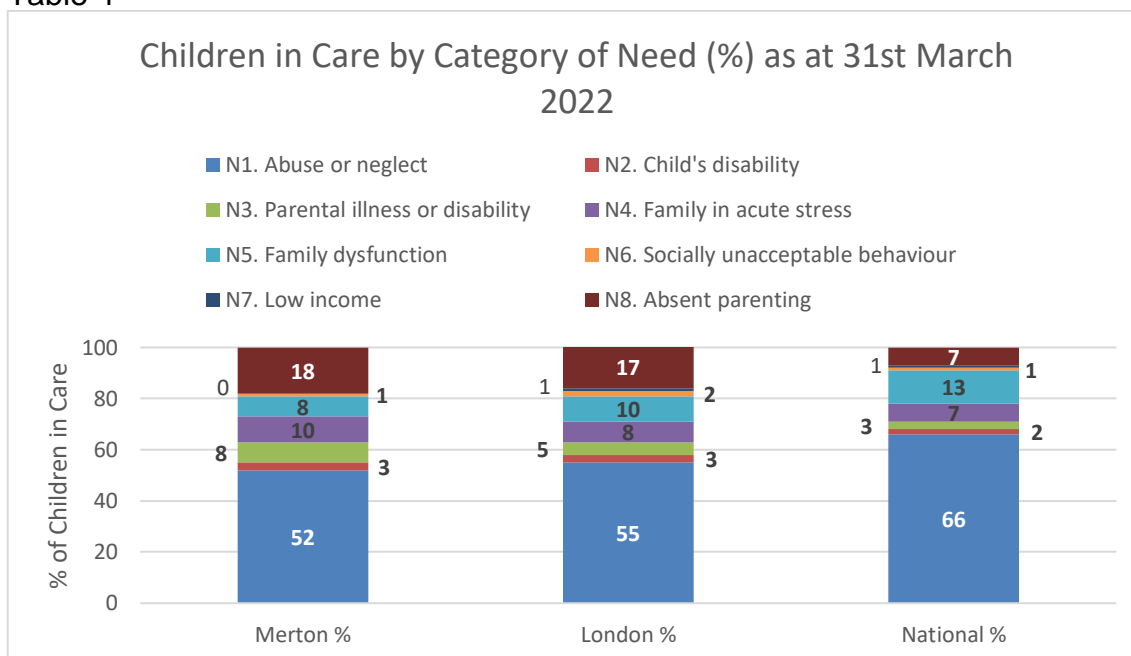


Table 4



The above is a comparative graph showing the reasons why children entered care. Merton is roughly in line with the London wide picture. There is 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 Central government has made participation in the National Transfer Scheme mandatory, we may see this balance out over the next few years.

Table 5

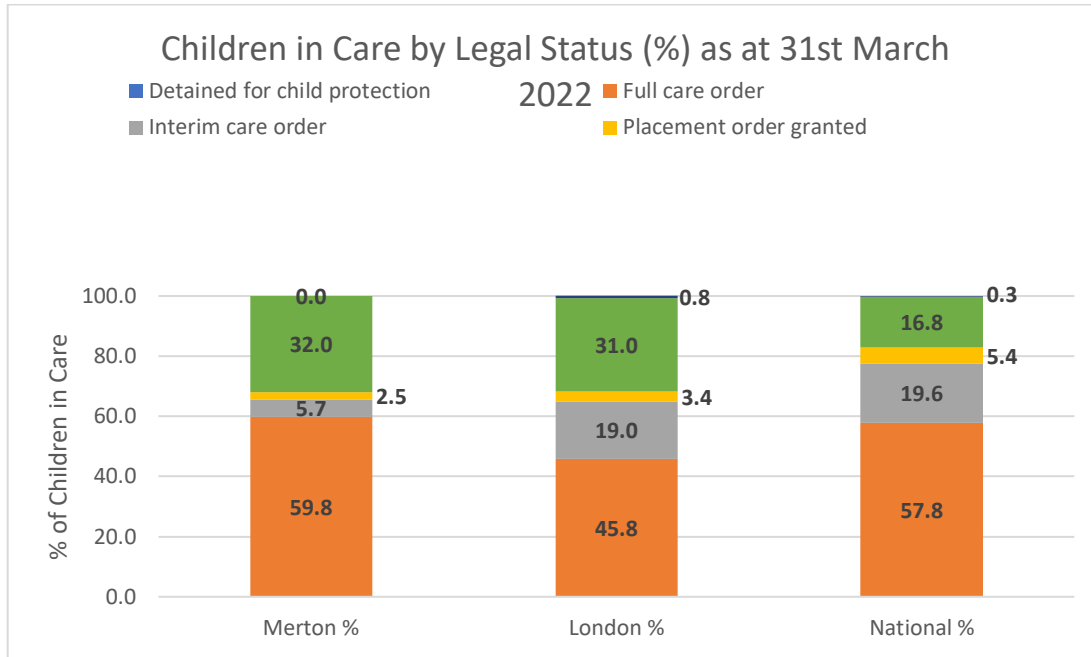
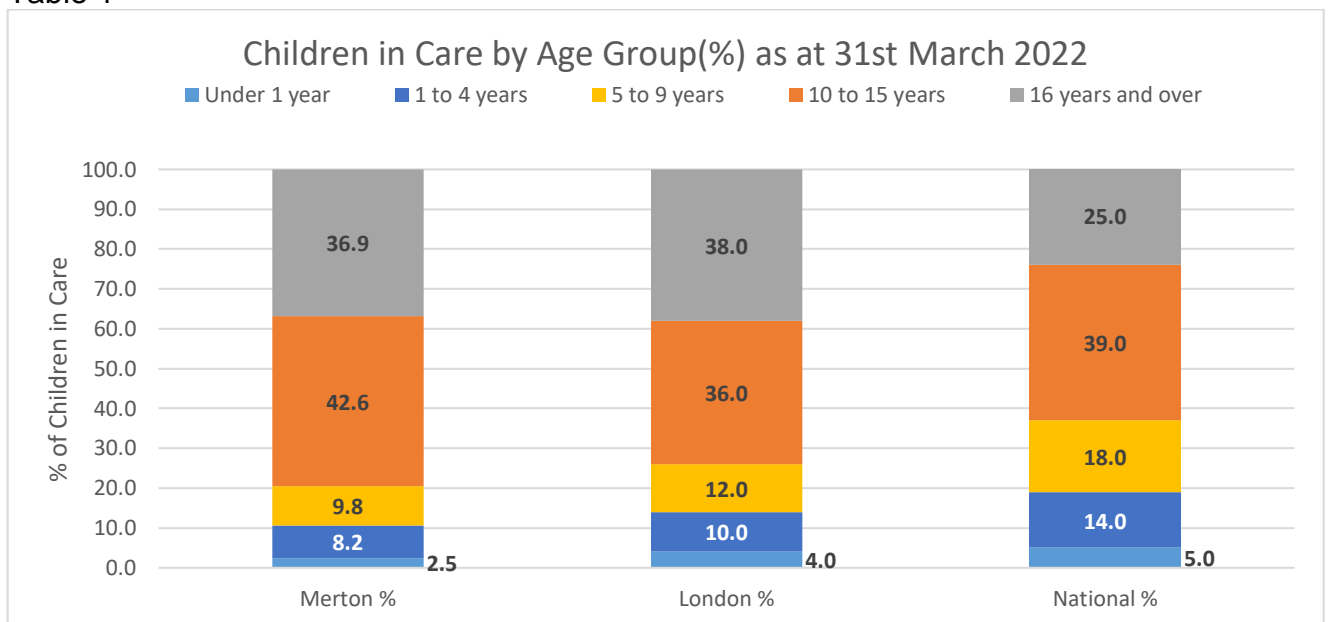


Table 5 shows that Merton had less interim care orders than the London and National average. This is in line with and for similar reasons to the drop in numbers of children entering care discussed earlier in this section. The disparity between London and Nationally around use of Section 20 is predominately around the higher number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children London accommodations.

### III. Section 1: Demographics

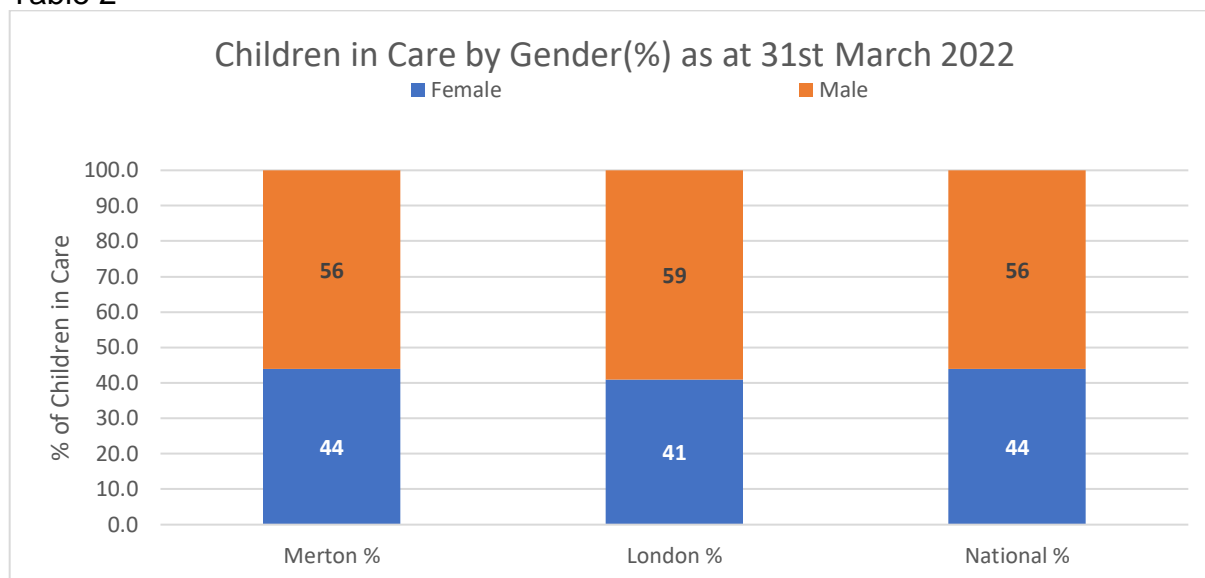
Table 1



Merton is in line with the national trend of seeing more children enter care in late childhood. This is particularly stark in London with some causal reasons being our duty towards unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, who are mostly 16 or 17 years of age, and the rise

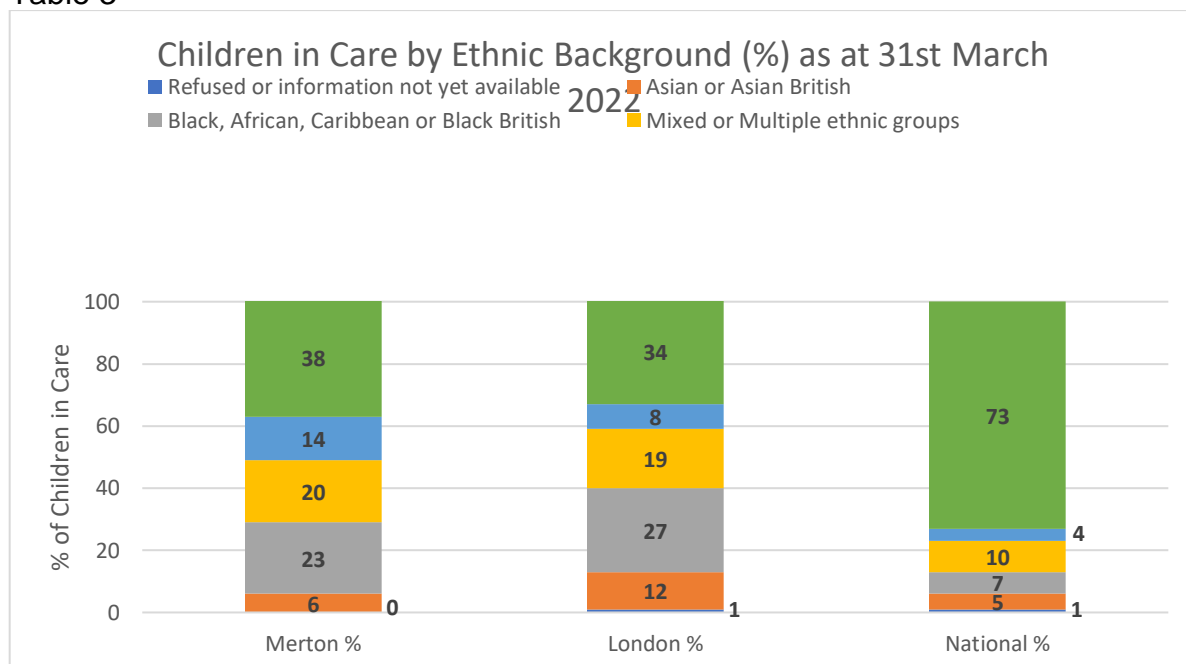
of contextual safeguarding concerns for adolescents. This snapshot shows that Merton has seen a rise in the % of 10–15-year-olds from the previous year (42.6% up from 34.5%), which is also significantly higher than London. Due to Merton’s low numbers, it is easier to have statistical fluctuations when anomalies occur. At the time of writing this report, the percentage of this cohort has decreased again to be more in line with London and National averages.

Table 2



Merton’s ratio between male and female is in line with the national picture but slightly out of line with London. However, like the rest of London, Merton does have 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 it is



difficult to point to causal connections, 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.

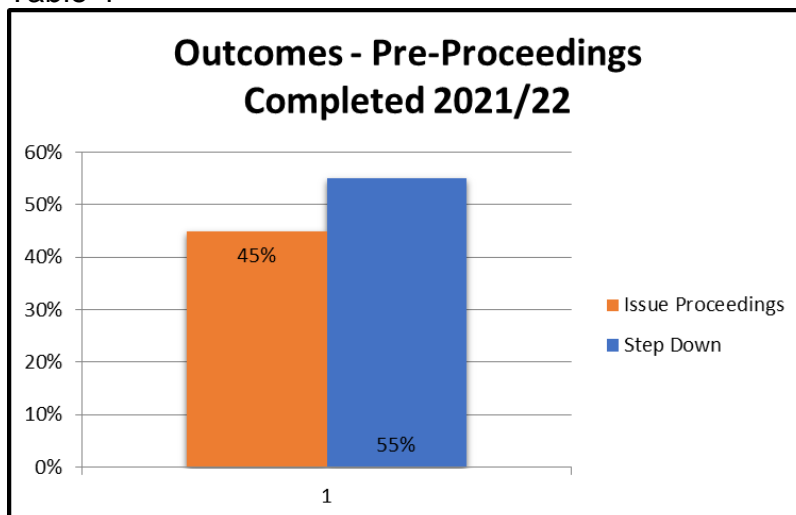
##### Pre-Proceedings

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 7 families (11 children) which was lower to the previous year (13 families, 21 children). Of the cases for which the pre-proceedings process was ended between April 2021 and March 2022, the average time spent in pre-proceedings was 25 weeks. (This is in line with the previous year which was at 27 weeks).

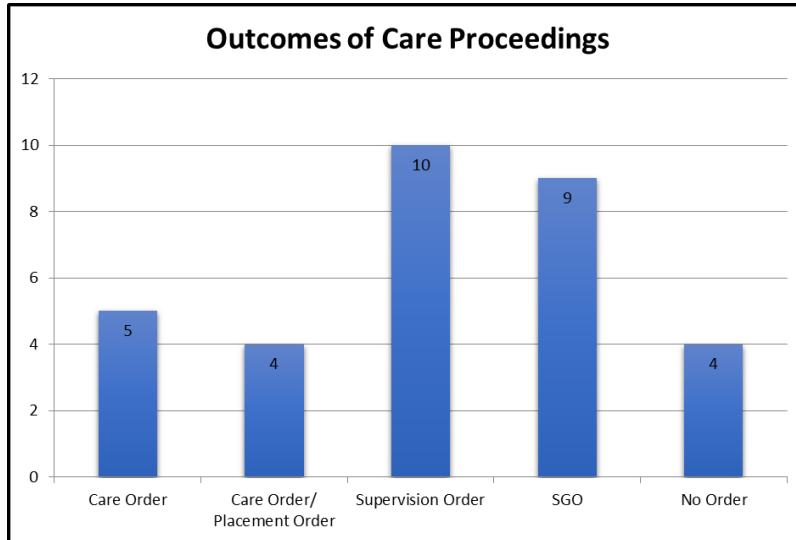
During the year, 11 families concluded pre-proceedings with 55% of families successfully stepping down and successfully diverted from entering proceedings. This was in line with the previous year's performance.

Table 4



##### Care Proceedings

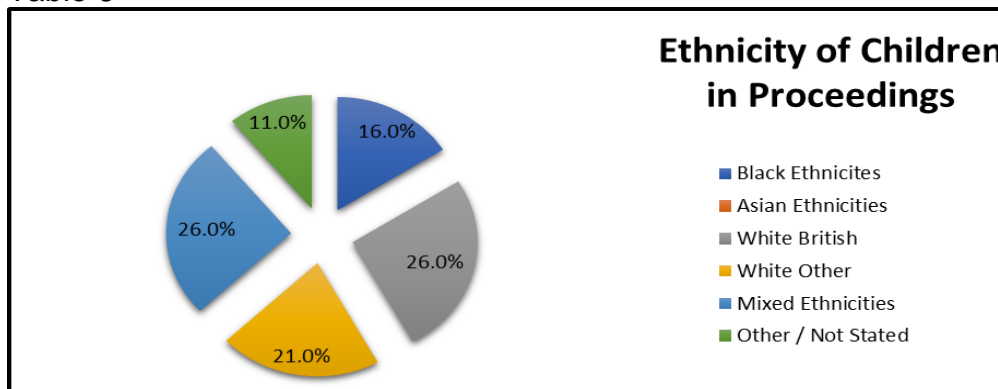
Table 5



During the reporting year, we issued proceedings for 13 families, consisting of 19 children. This was a decrease from the previous year when proceedings were issued for 19 families (40 children). During the reporting year, Merton concluded proceedings in a total of 17 cases, involving 32 children. Our average number of weeks spent in proceedings was 52 weeks which was an increase from the 46 week average during the 2020/2021 reporting year and considerably above the national target of 26-weeks. However, this must be considered in the context of the courts experiencing significant Pandemic related challenges such as lockdowns. Merton’s timeliness of proceedings was in line with other local authorities using the West London Court and our neighbouring boroughs.

All but 5 children who we concluded proceedings for experienced outcomes in which they were placed within their birth or wider family network. This is very positive and reflects the commitment Merton has to keeping children within their family. This is in line with the previous year when only 6 out of 40 children ended up being cared for by carers formerly unknown to them.

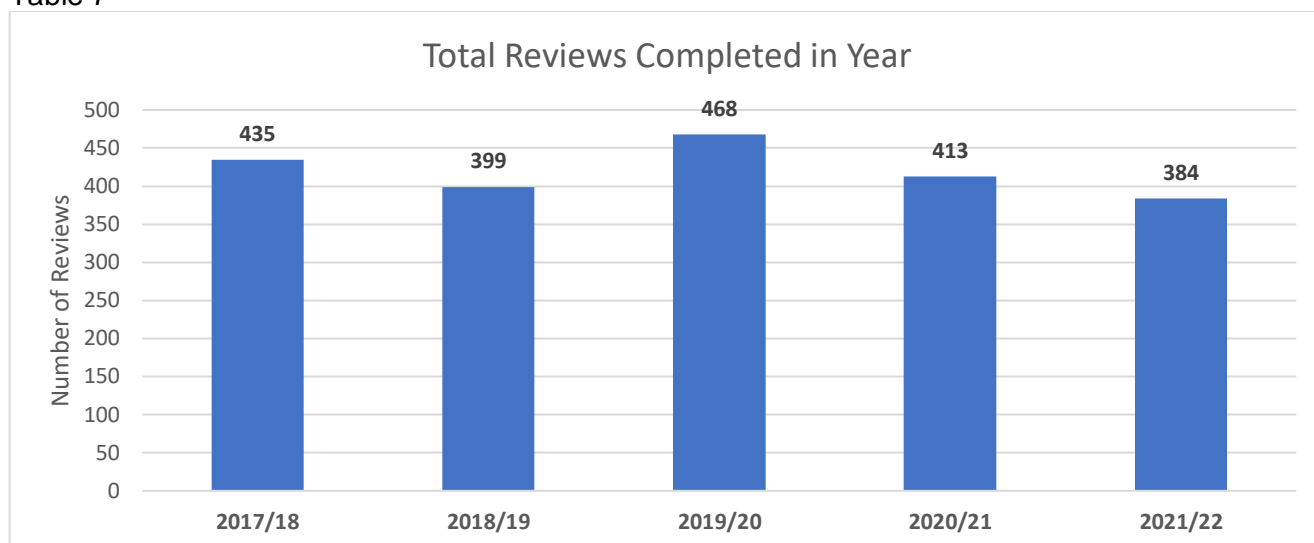
Table 6



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 7



The above graph shows a high number of reviews were undertaken in the year which evidences a prominent level of oversight from the Independent Reviewing Service. 97% of reviews were held within statutory timescales.

Table 8

<b>Method of Participation at Review</b>	<b>2021/22</b>		<b>2020/21</b>	
PN0 – Child Aged under 4 at time of review	40	11%	42	10%
PN1 – Child physically attends and speaks for him/her self	216	57%	247	60%
PN2 – Child physically attends and an advocate speaks on his/her behalf	5	1%	4	1%
PN3 – Child attends and conveys his/her views symbolically (non-verbally)	1	0%	3	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%	4	1%
PN5 – Child does not attend physically, but briefs an advocate to speak for him/her	6	2%	14	3%
PN6 – Child does not attend, but conveys his/her feelings to the review by a facilitative medium	64	17%	71	17%
PN7 - child did not attend and views not conveyed	35	9%	28	7%
Not recorded	6	2%	0	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>100%</b>

The graph above shows that 88% of children above the age of 4, participated in their review by some means. 67% of reviews had the child in attendance (excluding children under 5).

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

*'You will have somewhere safe to call 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. Whilst there were initial teething issues, most have settled down and regular practices established. The Permanency Lead who moved to the Corporate Parenting Service post the restructure is also the Adoption Link with Adopt London South. She has regular meetings with the ALS designated Merton link and they enjoy a strong working relationship.

During the year, 3 children were adopted. The average time between these children entering care and moving in with their adoptive families was 435 days and below the national average. This was higher than the previous year. The average over the 2-year period was 378 Days. One of the three children was from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic community. At the end of the reporting year, there were 4 children with placement orders waiting to be adopted. All had been matched and were living with their prospective adopters.

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

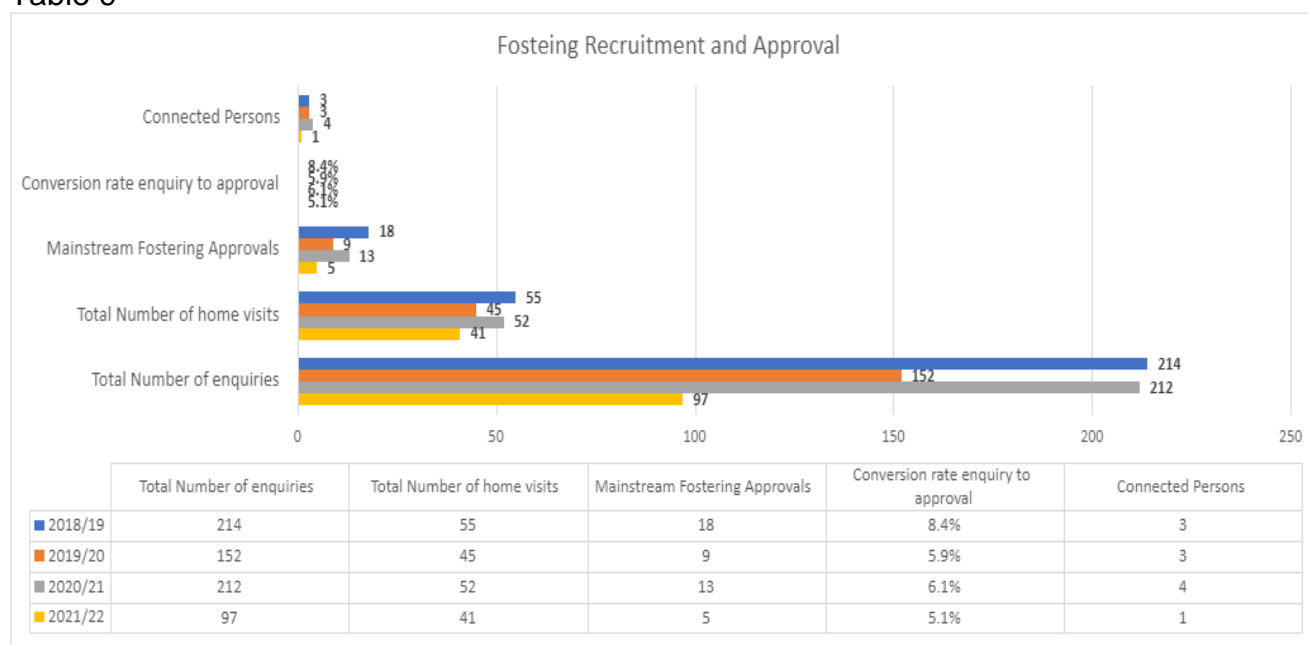
There has been a focus on permanence over the previous 2 years. A lot of work was undertaken to ensure meaningful permanence planning meetings were taking place for children and Life Story Work was being undertaken to ensure children had an understanding and positive narrative of their journey into, and through care. Training had been provided by external, reputable trainers before an internal training offer was established by our own Permanency Lead following their transfer into the Corporate Parenting Service post-restructure.

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 specific details of children in long term foster care, relating to their permanence, are not collated by the Department for Education (DfE) nor reportable in our Mosaic case management system. However, the service does hold this data and tracks it. At the end of quarter 3 in the reporting year this paper covers, we had 53 children, under the age of 16, in long term foster care. 29 of these children had been matched with their carers, 17 were living with their prospective long-term fostering carers. Only 7 children were living in a home which was not going to be their long-term home. The network around a child holds a permanency planning meeting for all children who are not yet matched with their long-term carers. A file audit of 17-children showed evidence of direct work and life story work being

undertaken with 82% of them. 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 9



It has been a particularly challenging year of fostering recruitment. The numbers of enquiries and approvals are significantly lower than previous years. Merton has a dedicated, part time, fostering recruitment officer who links in with other Local Authorities. Anecdotally, feedback has been that what Merton is seeing is reflected elsewhere. However, as reported last year, this downturn correlates with their being no dedicated budget for fostering recruitment. There was a rise in enquiries in 2020/21 which could have been due to positive community spirit harnessed during the lockdowns. Similarly, the drop in the 2021/22 could have been due to that community spirit waning due to pandemic fatigue or the following cost of living crises. The national shortage of foster carers is well documented, and we need to think more creatively than ever around our sufficiency strategy. Merton joined 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.

### 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 2022, 85% of children in our care were placed in foster care which is the same as 2021. This is above the national figure of 71%. 72% of children in foster care were living with in-house foster carers. At the end of March 2022, we had 76 approved foster households (67 mainstream and 9 connected carer households), which was a decrease on the previous year when we had 81 fostering households. There are also 14 care leavers still living in their inhouse foster homes under ‘*staying put*’ arrangements.

Excitingly, this year saw the launch of our first Mockingbird Constellation on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 2021. The Mockingbird Family Model of fostering looks to replicate strong and supportive extended family networks for fostering households through creating a community with 6-10 other foster households (called a constellation). Academic evaluations of the model have shown that it improves placement stability and strengthens the relationships between carers, children and young people, fostering services and birth families<sup>5</sup>. The project's implementation was delayed due to the pandemic but since the launch it has gone from strength to strength.

### 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 2022, we had 6 children living in residential children's homes. One child from this cohort lives in a residential home due to having a disability that requires a higher level of care than foster care can provide. We have two other children living with disabilities who reside in residential school settings. Case management responsibility for these three children is held within the Children with Disabilities team and the decision to place in residential care is primarily made for health reasons. Decisions to place a child in residential settings are taken with an elevated level of scrutiny to ensure that we are making the right decision for individual children. First the child's professional network needs to agree that a residential home is in the child's best interest and that there are no foster homes or birth family options which could meet their needs. The Head of Service needs to endorse this recommendation with the final decision being made in consultation with the Assistant Director for Children's Social Care and Youth Inclusion.

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 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 5 young people living in SIA provision, which was a decrease from 14 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 for a tiny number of children. As of 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2022, Merton had 1 child placed in SIA accommodation whose needs required a regulated children's home. To ensure the safety and progress of the child, we had a robust safety plan that was shared with both the court and Ofsted.

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<sup>5</sup> [Mockingbird programme \(thefosteringnetwork.org.uk\)](https://thefosteringnetwork.org.uk)

## How Far Our Children Live from Merton

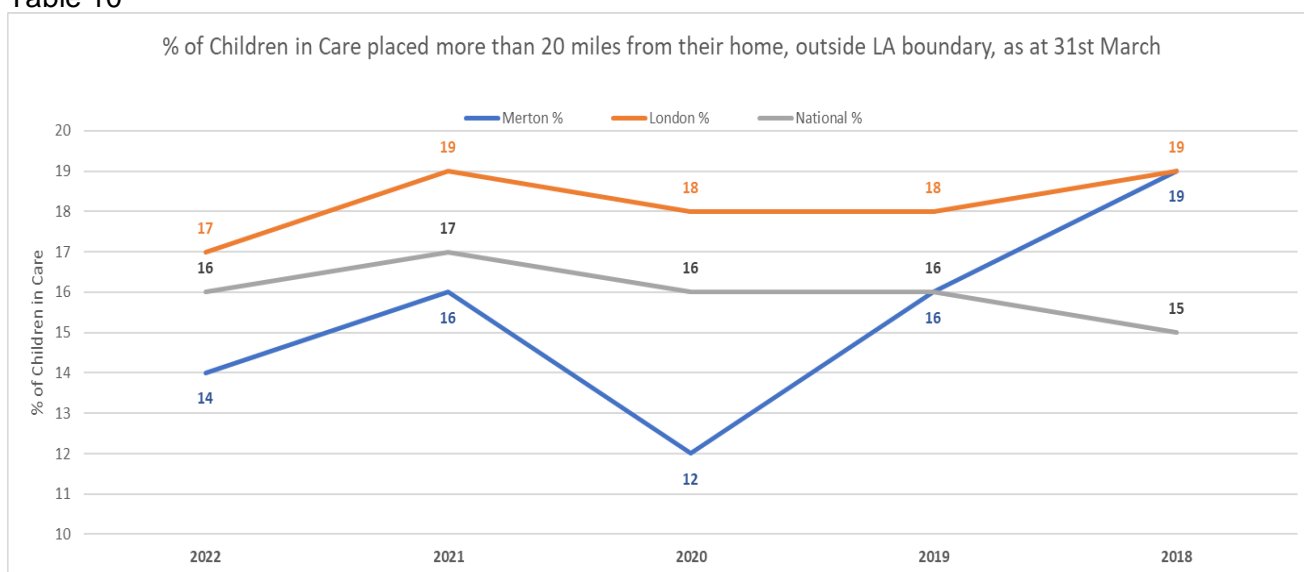
We always try to keep children living either in or as close to Merton as possible. There are many advantages to this, with the most important being to make ongoing meaningful contact between children and their birth families/networks easier to nurture. However, it is also advantageous to use Merton’s 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. 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 London Care Solutions and The South London Commissioning Programme.

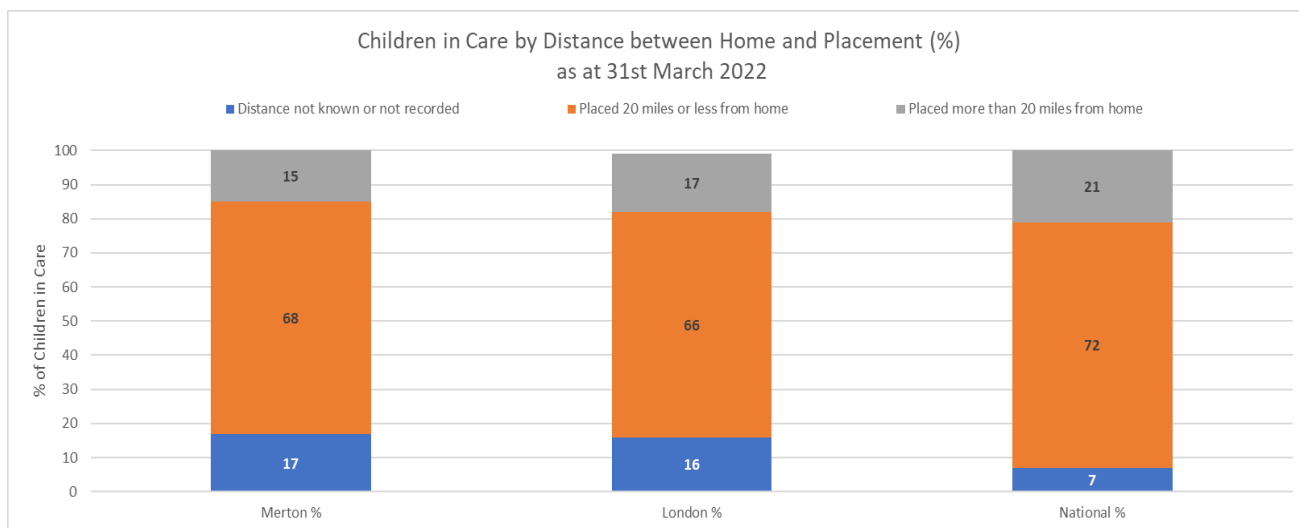
### Placement Location

Table 10



However, Merton is not alone in these challenges. Positively this year has seen a slight decrease which is also mirrored in London and Nationally. We are ambitious about continuing this trend and are currently looking at options to create more post-18 accommodation in borough for care experienced young people. The table below shows that we perform well in comparison to our London neighbours and nationally.

Table 11

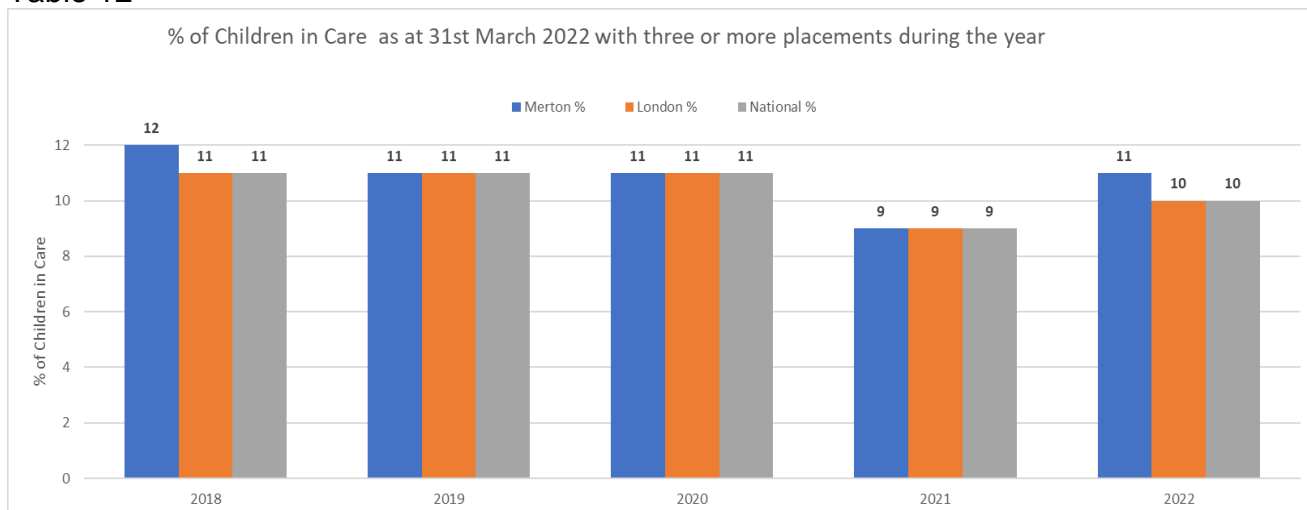


'Distance not known or not recorded' includes unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

### 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 in the Mockingbird Model of Fostering as discussed in the fostering support section.

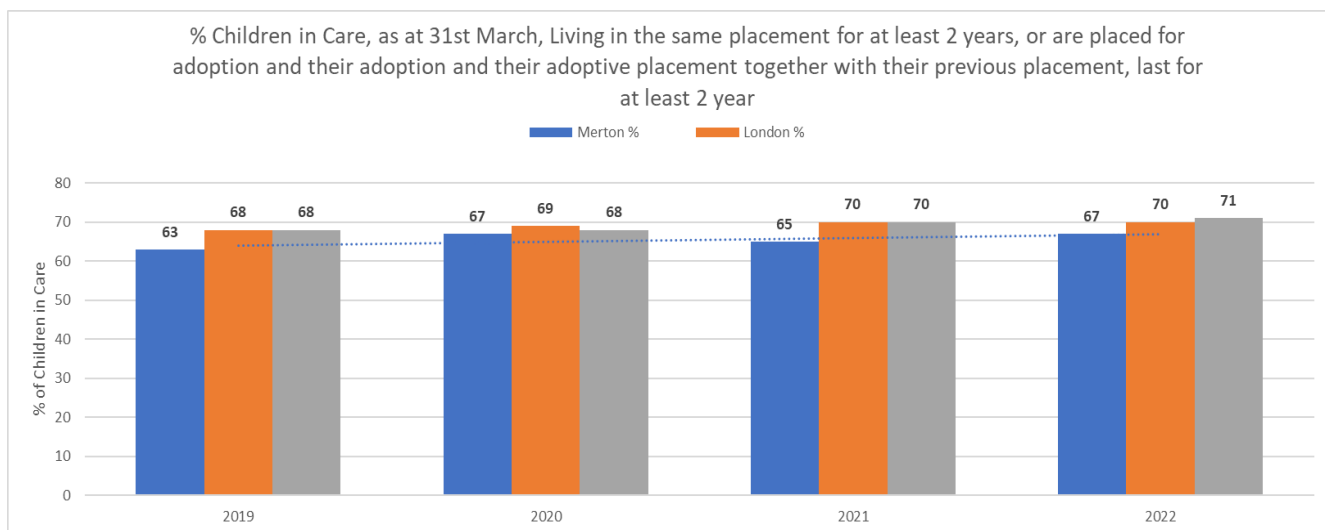
Table 12



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 13





Permanence and stability through children having a sense of belonging 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.

## V. Section 4: Health

Initial Health Assessments (IHA) are delivered through the Epsom and St Helier NHS Trust. They reported that 43% of children had their IHA in timescale after breach exceptions were considered. However, without the agreed exceptions only 10% of children were seen within the 28-day statutory time frame. 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 coincided with the NHS experiencing significant staffing at Epsom and St Helier's. 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. 138 RHAs were undertaken during the year, with 96% in timescales. This is above the national and London averages (89% and 92%) and is a testament to the commitment of our dedicated looked after care nurses.

Performance on immunisations are tracked for children who have been in care for longer than 12-months. 76% of these children had their immunisations up to date, which was a decrease from the 82% the previous reporting year. The percentage of children with an up-to-date dental check was 89% at the end of March 2022. This was up from 63% at the same time the previous year which was low due to the pandemic. Regarding dental checks, Merton has recovered much better than many other Local Authorities with the London average being 69% and National 70%. This is a credit to the strong working relationships between social workers, fostering carers and looked after children nurses.

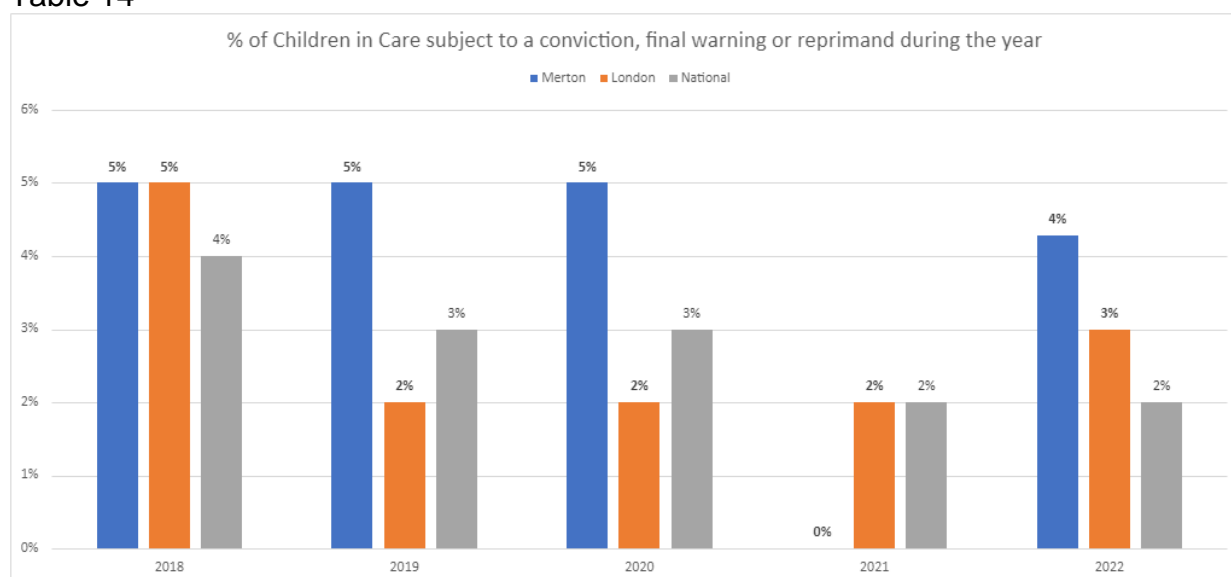
Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQ) are sent out to all children, carers and schools for children between the ages of 5-16 years old. SDQ are tools used to assess and monitor

children’s emotional well-being. Encouragingly we achieved an 87% completion which was above both the London and National averages (85 & 77).

### Section 5 Offending

Because no Merton child in care was given a substantial outcome in relation to offending behaviour in 2020/2021, 2022 was always likely to show an increase in offenses. Merton’s 4% of children subjected to a conviction, final warning or reprimand represents only 2 children. Merton’s very small numbers of children in care over the age of criminal responsibility (70), a single child receiving an order can have a significant impact on our statistics. In the last five years, Merton have had no more than 4 children in care receive a substantive outcome through the criminal justice system.

Table 14

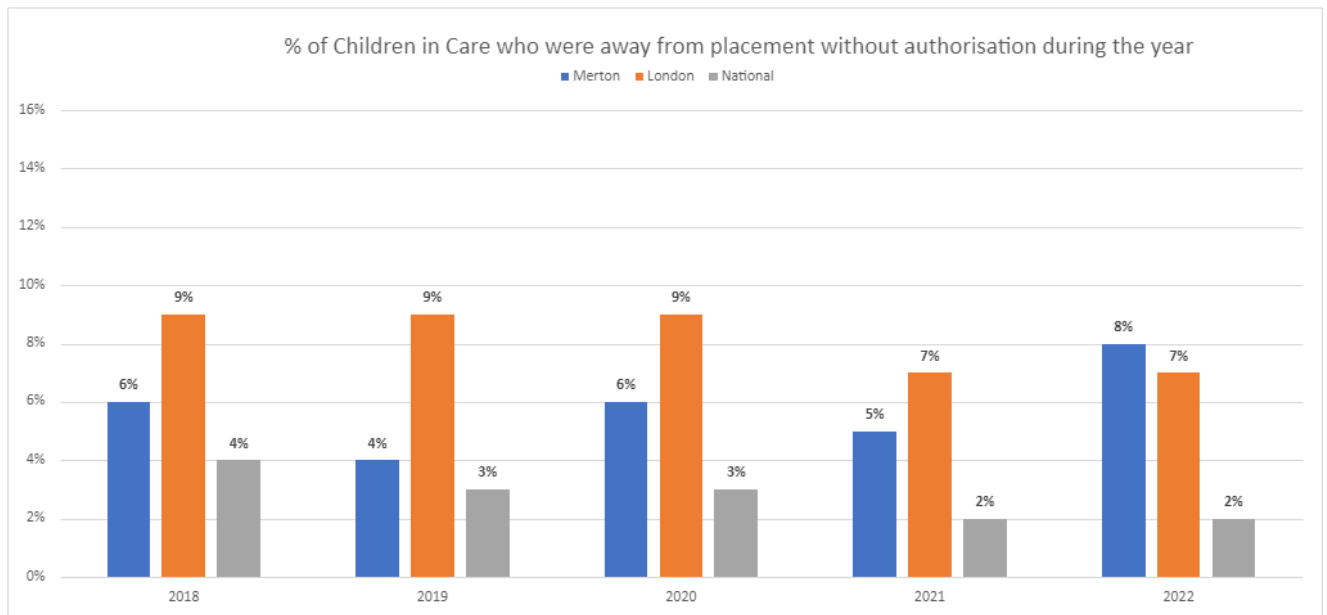


### Missing and Child Exploitation

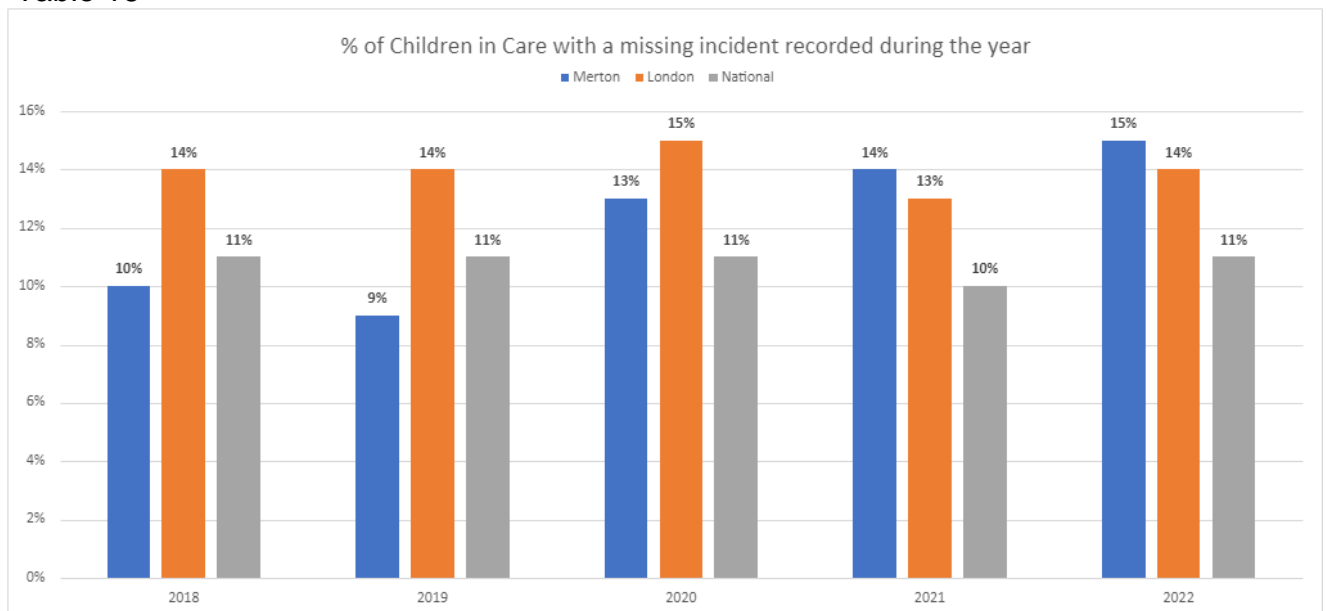
In line with other London boroughs, the numbers of children in care going missing have increased since Covid-19 and remain significantly higher than national average. In Merton, our numbers of children leaving placements without authorisation and children going missing are both 1% higher than other London boroughs.

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. Most of our young people who go missing are male, and aged 14-18.

Table 15



**Table 16**



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.

## **VI. 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. 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 work closely alongside schools, carers and social work teams. Following the disrupted year which impacted all students across the nation, getting children back into school routines has been a challenge. Merton’s children in care attendance was 91% with primary being 97%. 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 outcomes across the year included:

- 62.5% of children consistently made academic progress against their own targets each term. Of those who did not make progress earlier in the year, 43% made progress as the academic year went on.
- Of the children in Key Stage 2, 68% achieved the standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined which was higher than the Nation and regional figure for children in care and even the rate of all Merton children (National CLA 32%; Regional CLA 36% and Merton All Children 61.1%).
- Merton had 16 undergraduate students during the year. 2 of these were post graduate, 1 of whom obtained a master’s degree. One young person secured a First-class degree in BA Hons Business Management, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship.

The Virtual School Headteacher’s Annual Report 2021/2022 contains further details. This will be shared at the Virtual School Steering Group and subsequently the Corporate Parenting Board in March 2023.

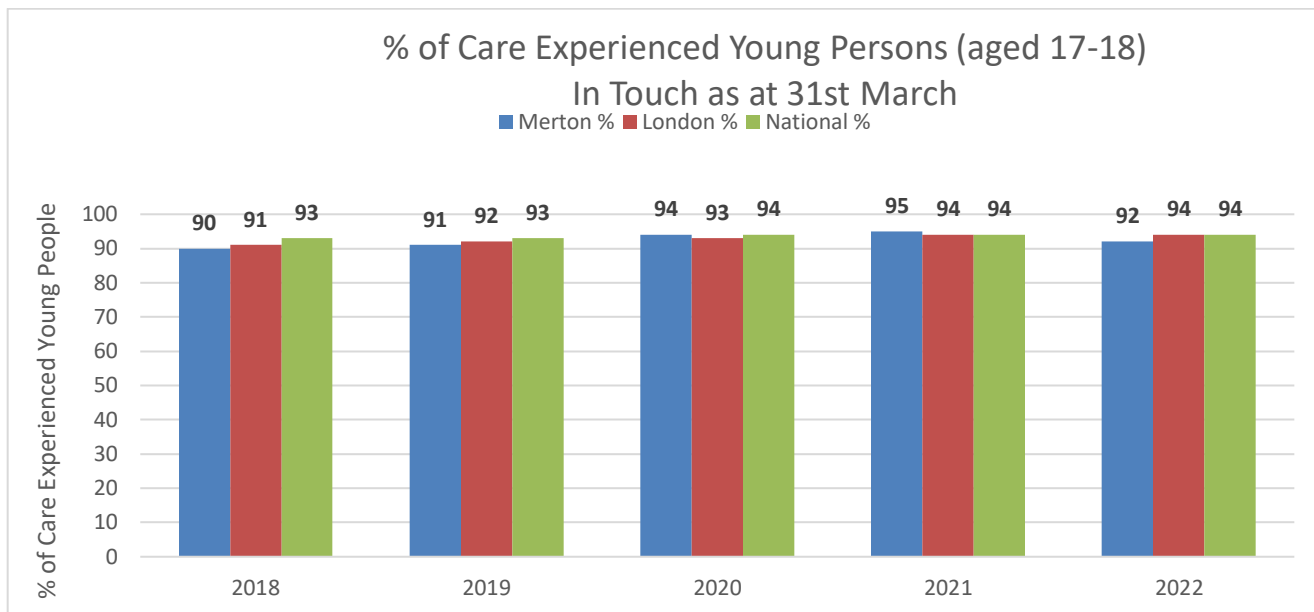
## **VII. Section 7: Care Experienced Young People aged 19-21 years**

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.

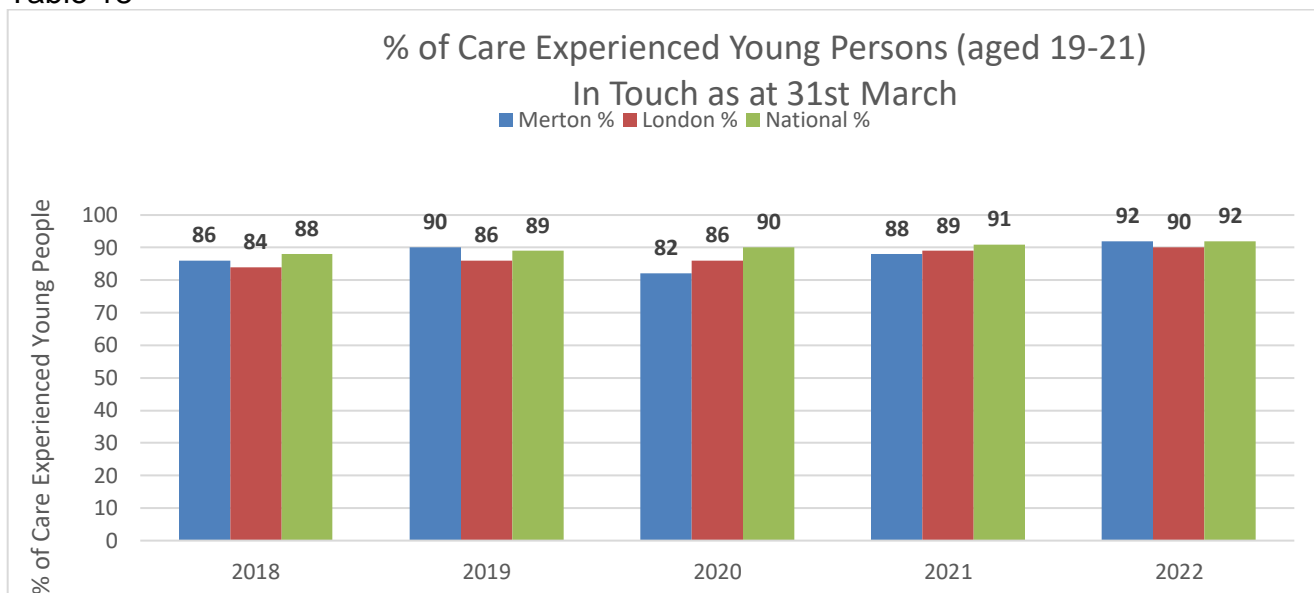
### *Care Experienced Young People in Touch*

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 19-21 cohort which saw it raise from 88% in 2021 to 92% in 2022.

Table 17



**Table 18**



**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 19**

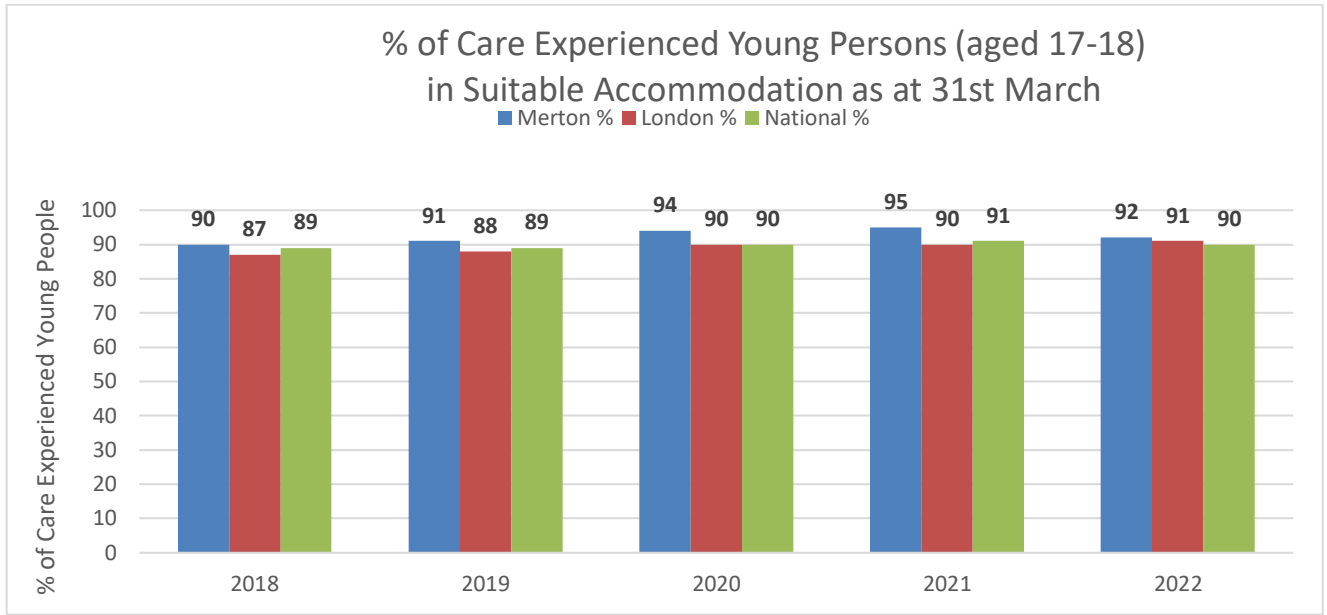
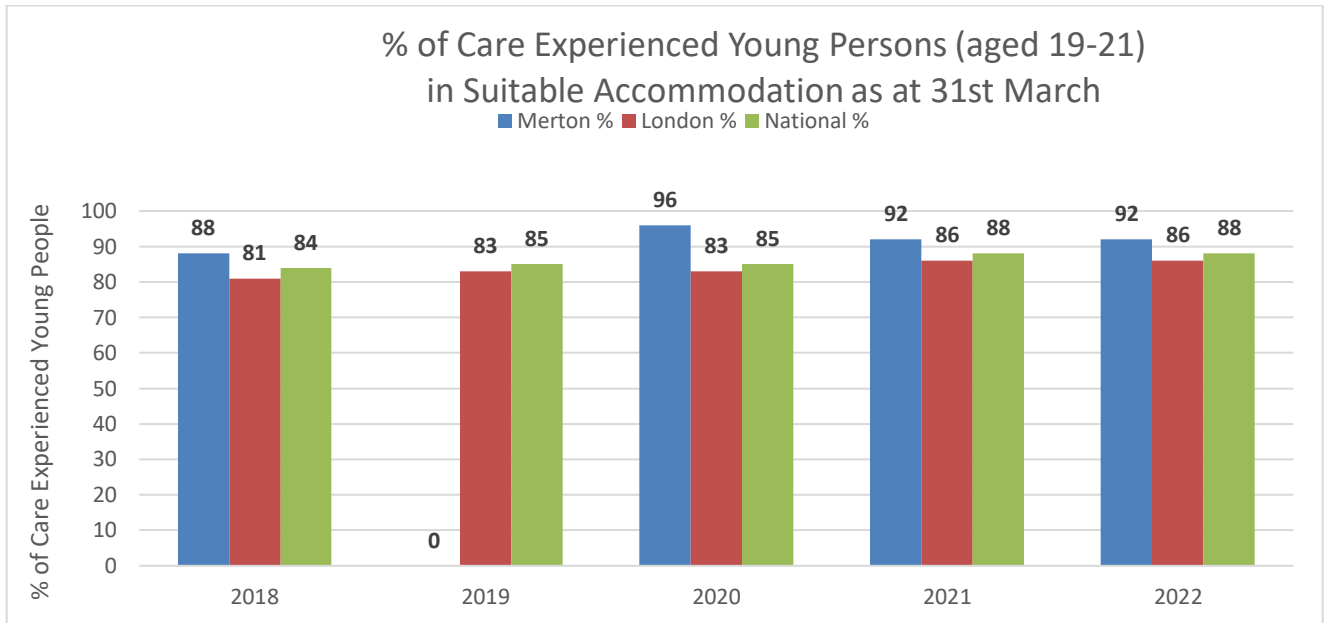
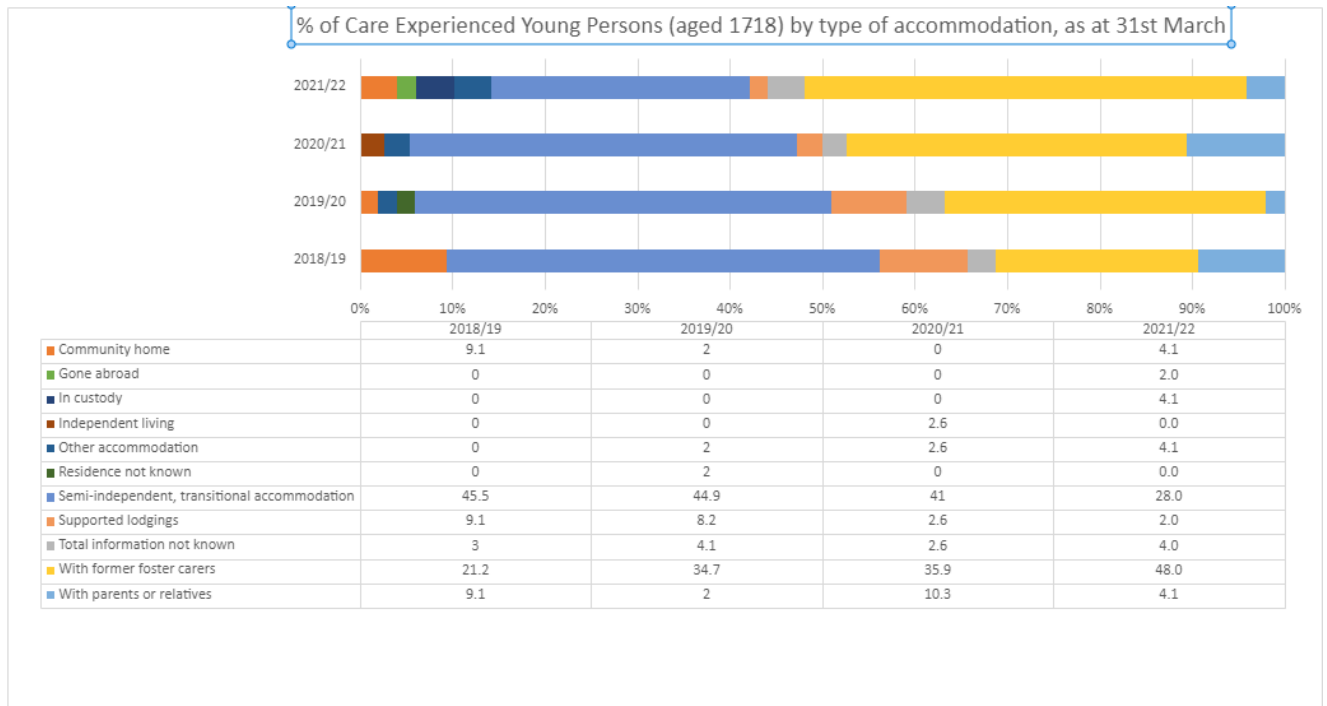


Table 20



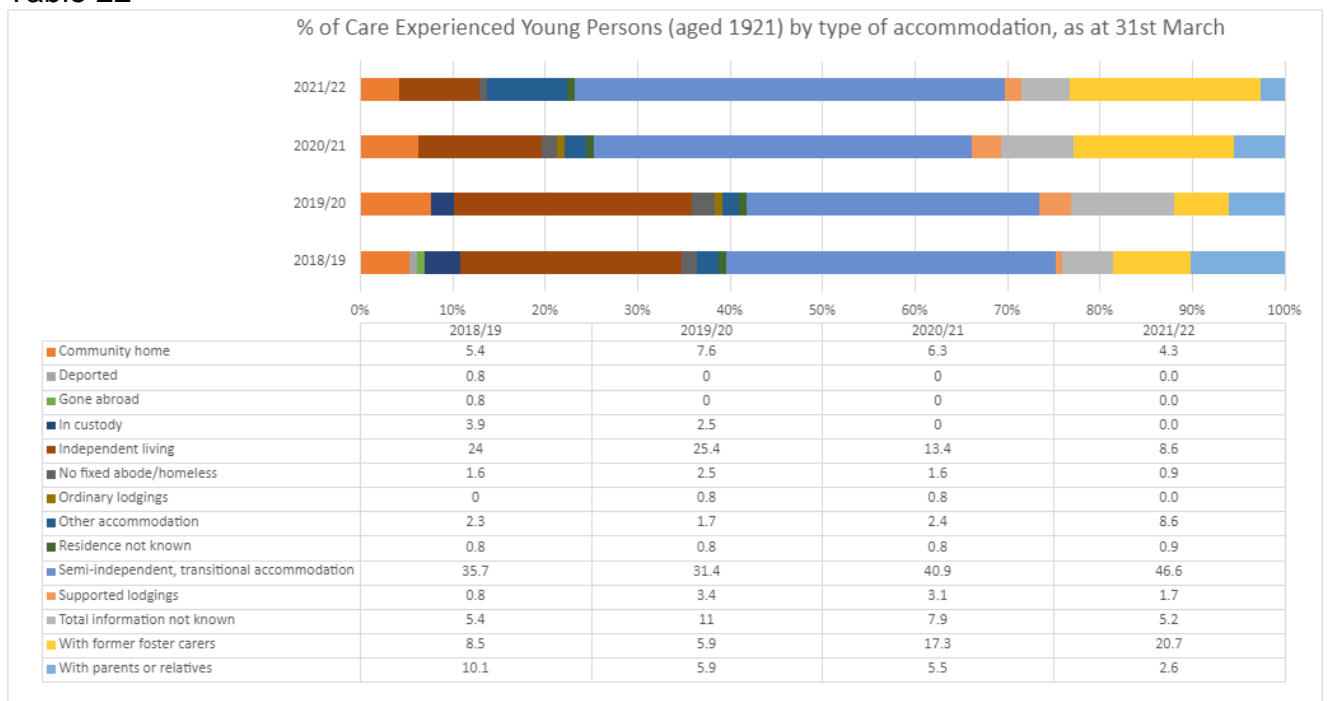
The graphs show that Merton continues to perform well comparatively with other local authorities.

Table 21



The above shows the types of accommodation our 18-year-olds are living in. It is very positive to see the high numbers 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 22



The above graphs shows a dip 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 high numbers of 19

and 20-year olds remaining with their former foster carers shows the commitment the fostering community has to our children.

### 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 risen from 69% to 82% with 18-year-olds, and from 58% to 65% of 19-21-year-olds being in some form of Education, Employment and Training (EET).

Table 23

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)	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>	45%	51%	66%	52%	50%	53%	58%	52%	65%	55%
<b>Total information not known</b>	13%	10%	5%	9%	11%	9%	6%	7%	6%	7%
<b>Total not in Education, Employment or Training</b>	43%	39%	29%	39%	39%	39%	35%	41%	29%	38%

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

Table 24

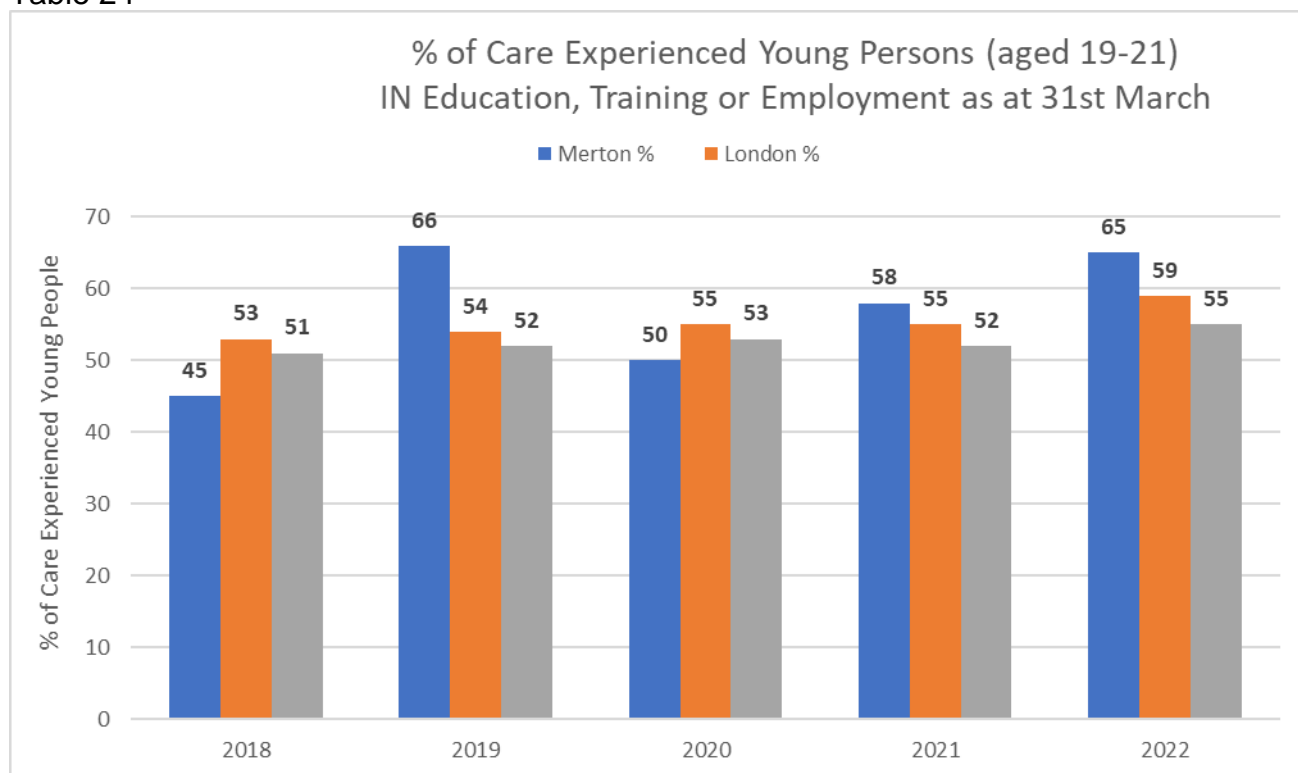
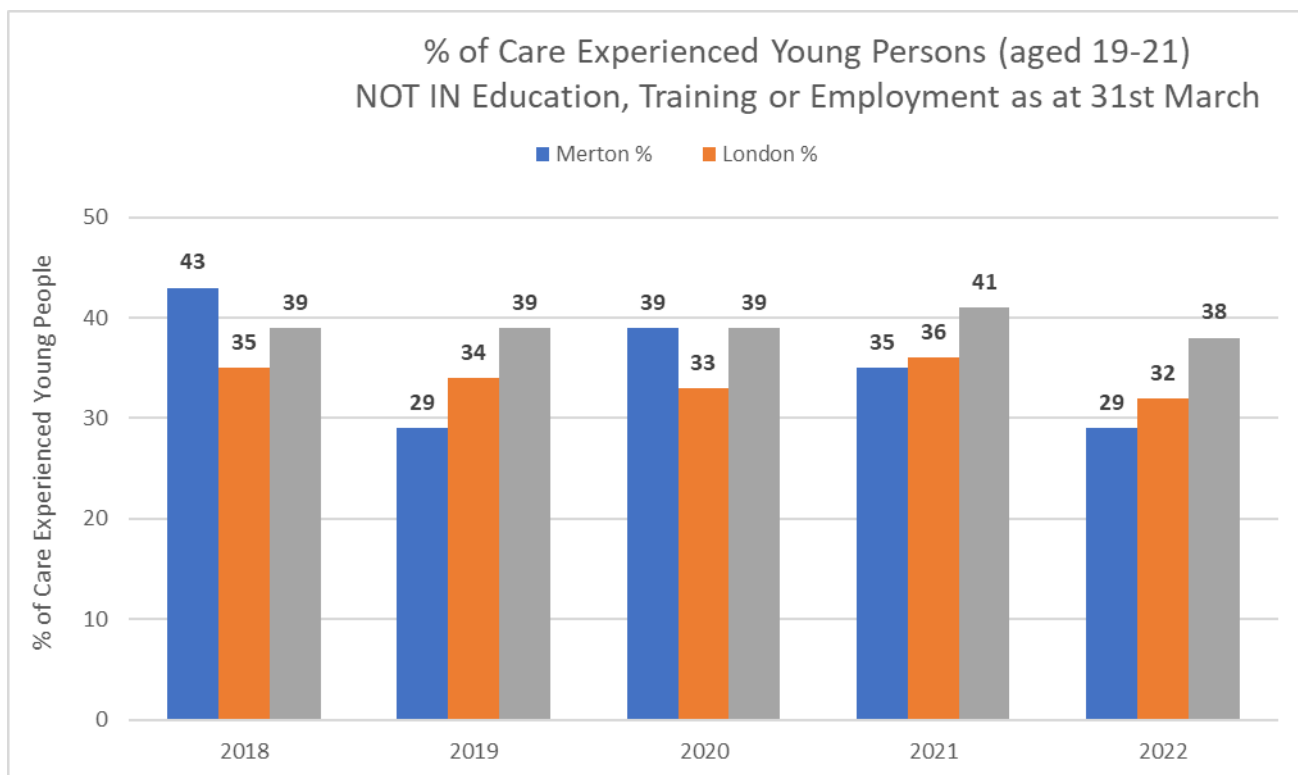


Table 25





Whilst the above performance is encouraging, 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. 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 Children in Care Council (CICC)

For contextual reasons discussed in previous annual reports, our Children in Care Council was in a state of transition and was in the process of being re-established when the Pandemic hit. During the Pandemic hit year of 2020/2021, a series of 'cooking with friends' engagement sessions were carried out by the participation service. Excitingly, we were able to relaunch the children in care council 'Our Voice' in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of this year with face-to-face meetings. We have a vision to identify a location to launch a care leavers hub to be used for the 'Our Voice' meetings and be the base for general engagement evenings.

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.

### Voice of the Child in Care

The last survey for our children in care was undertaken by Bright Spots in 2018 and has continued to inform our current planning and strategies. 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. We have recommissioned Coram Voice to undertake another Bright Spots survey for both the children in care cohort and care experienced young people. The surveys closed on the last day of the reporting year this report covers. The participation rate in the survey was very high which demonstrated the commitment of staff to ensure children get their voice heard. The results of the survey will be used to shape the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

### Advocacy and Independent Visiting

Jigsaw4u have been providing advocacy and independent visiting since 2013 as a commissioned service. The contract has recently been extended till 2025.

Jigsaw4u received 60 referrals for advocacy for children in their reviews in 2021/22. This was a slight increase from last year's 39 and above the target of 45. 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 rise in referrals shows Merton's growing commitment to ensure children's voices are heard and listened to.

As of 31 March 2022, Jigsaw4u were providing 9 young people with Independent Visitors. There are 2 young people on their waiting list. 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 35 young people (across the borough not just children in care/care experienced) in making a complaint. Positively, this was above the target of 12. Whilst it may seem counterintuitive to suggest more complaints are positive, 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. Some of the matters they supported young people around were issues in a foster placement and subsistence and housing issues for a care experienced young person. Jigsaw4u worked with the service around the formality of response letters and as a result they now report that young people now find our responses are easier to read and understand.

### **VIII. Conclusion**

Despite a major restructure in Children's Social Care, Merton remained focused on achieving good outcomes for our care experienced children and improving services. The workforce was rewarded for their hard work when Ofsted judged our services to be 'Outstanding' during their February inspection. We finished the year achieving an excellent response rate to our Coram Voice commissioned 'Bright Spots' survey which will provide us with an understanding of how children and young people experience our services, which we will use to shape the service moving forward. With an organisational culture that prioritises listening 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.

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

**Date: 13th March 2023**

Agenda item:

### **Subject: Education Standards Report**

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

Lead member: Cllr Sally Kenny, Cabinet Member Education and Lifelong Learning

Contact officer: Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, Assistant Director Education and Early Help

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### **Recommendations:**

A. Members to note the contents of the report

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## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1. This report provides information about the education standards, and achievement of children and young people in Merton over the academic year 2021-2022. It identifies how the Local Authority (LA) has worked in partnership with schools to secure and maintain improvement.

## **2 DETAIL**

2.1. The proportion of schools judged to be good or better in Merton rose from 95% to 96% over the course of the academic year. 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. Two of the Borough's 44 primary schools were not yet judged to be good or better as of August 2022. This means that 95% of primary schools were judged to be good or better at that point, which is above the national average of 89% 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.

2.2. In 2022 attainment at all key stages and in the vast majority of indicators is above national averages. However, the outcomes for 2022 in most primary phase indicators are lower in comparison with pre-pandemic performance (as has happened nationally), whilst it has risen slightly in most secondary phase indicators (again mirroring the national picture). National rankings continue to be strong in particular in the progress measures at KS2 for reading and maths, and for GCSE. The quartile performance in relation to the Borough's statistical neighbours and to other Outer London boroughs identifies that, although there have been some improvements, there have also been some relative drops in performance in comparison, identifying where further improvements could still be secured.

2.3. The proportion of children in Merton schools achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) in 2022 is 3.8 percentage points above the national average and

1.2 percentage points above the London average. There has however been a significant dip in national, London and Merton proportions of pupils achieving the GLD in 2021/2022 compared with the last two years in which there was published data. This reflects the unique circumstances this cohort of pupils experienced in Nursery and Reception as well as the changes in how their achievement was assessed and reported.

2.4. 80% of pupils reached the expected standard for phonics decoding in Merton, this is above both London and national averages. Although Merton outcomes represent a drop of three percentage points since 2019, this is less of a decline than that seen in London (six percentage points) and nationally (seven percentage points).

2.5. At Key Stage 1 (KS1), in reading and in maths performance remains slightly above London averages at both the expected standard and greater depth, and performance continues to be well above national averages. Performance in writing is above national averages, but is in line with or below London averages. However, post pandemic, in each subject, performance at the expected standard and at greater depth has fallen in Merton, mirroring the trend in London and nationally. This reflects the disruption to pupils' learning caused by the pandemic. Pleasingly, performance in all three subjects at the Greater Depth standard ranks Merton highly in comparison with all other LAs (maths = 7th nationally, reading and writing = 16th nationally), and in comparison with its statistical neighbours and other Outer London boroughs in reading and maths.

2.6. At Key Stage 2 (KS2), the progress and attainment scores in each of reading, writing and mathematics are all above the national averages, and above or in line with London averages, with the exception of writing where the progress score and attainment at the Expected Standard is below London. The progress score in mathematics ranks Merton 13th.

2.7. Performance in Merton secondary schools at KS4 remains very strong. At 0.52, the Progress 8 score in Merton is well above national and London averages, 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 (53.6) is above the national and the London averages. Three Merton mainstream schools are just below the national average (Harris Academy Morden, St Mark's Academy and Raynes Park High School). The proportion of pupils achieving grades 9-4 in the EBacc subjects, including English and maths is above the local as well as the national average. This is one indication of the breadth of curriculum being offered in Merton schools at KS4. The proportion of students achieving a standard 9-4 pass in English and mathematics is in line with London average but above the national average.

2.8. For KS5 qualifications the Average Point Score (APS) per entry is above the national averages for all qualification types. Whilst being above London averages for Tech Level and Applied General qualifications, outcomes for A level and Academic qualifications is just below. Merton's ranking in comparison with other LAs for Applied General qualifications has improved significantly (from 58th to 32nd), and the average grade is Distinction.

2.9. 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 moved to 5th best performance in England. This has been achieved as a result of

significant and robust tracking and partnership working across schools, colleges and CSF teams.

2.10. This year the proportion of 16 – 17 year olds participating in education and training has increased by 0.5 percentage points, and continues a four-year upward trend (against a fluctuating picture nationally). Merton's performance is in the first quintile (best performance) in comparison with other Local Authorities in England.

2.11. Attendance is at lower levels nationally than before the Pandemic and remains a national challenge. The most recent data for overall pupil attendance shows that Merton's performance is above the national average and just below the London average. This follows a number of years where we have been above London. The picture is the same for persistent absence. Attendance in special schools, affected particularly by the pandemic and the ongoing requirements to self-isolate following contact with Covid cases, is lower than London and national.

2.12. Merton had no primary or special school permanent exclusions in 2021-2022. This has been true for a number of 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 has increased slightly but remains below the national average and in lines with London averages. The number of fixed term exclusions has risen slightly in primary schools and though the rate is below that seen nationally, is just above the London averages. The number of fixed term exclusions in secondary schools has risen slightly but is below London and national averages. The figures for fixed term exclusions in Special Schools are based on small cohorts, with individual exclusions therefore being recorded as a high percentage. Nevertheless the significant rise is concerning and is a focus for 2022/23.

2.13. For children who are electively home educated, following the steep rise in numbers in 2020/21, which was mirrored nationally, for which the impact of the pandemic was cited as a key reason, there has been a small drop this year. Nevertheless, numbers remain high and are well above pre-pandemic levels at both the primary and the secondary phase. Over the past decade numbers have risen by over 200%, with the larger rise being seen in the primary phase. The numbers of boys and girls being electively home educated are broadly similar. The numbers starting to be home educated in Reception and in Year 7 remain higher than in other year groups, resulting in overall spikes at the beginning of both the primary and secondary phases.

## **2 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

3.1 Not applicable

## **4 TIMETABLE**

4.1 Not applicable

## **5 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Not applicable

## **6 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Not applicable

## **7 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 Not applicable

**8 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 Not applicable

**9 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Not applicable

**10 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT**

10.1 Education Standards Report 2021-22

**11 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 None

# CELEBRATING SUCCESS

*ACHIEVEMENT IN  
MERTON SCHOOLS  
2021 -2022*

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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 2021 - 2022. It identifies how the Local Authority (LA) has worked in partnership with schools to secure and maintain improvement.
2. The proportion of schools judged to be good or better in Merton rose from 95% to 96% over the course of the academic year. 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. Two of the Borough's 44 primary schools were not yet judged to be good or better as of August 2022. This means that 95% of primary schools were judged to be good or better at that point, which is above the national average of 89% 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. For more information please see [page 9](#).
3. In 2022 attainment at all key stages and in the vast majority of indicators is above national averages. However, the outcomes for 2022 in most primary phase indicators are lower in comparison with pre-pandemic performance (as has happened nationally), whilst it has risen slightly in most secondary phase indicators (again mirroring the national picture). National rankings continue to be strong in particular in the progress measures at KS2 for reading and maths, and for GCSE. The quartile performance in relation to the Borough's statistical neighbours and to other Outer London boroughs identifies that, although there have been some improvements, there have also been some relative drops in performance in comparison, identifying where further improvements could still be secured. For more information please see [page 5](#).
4. The proportion of children in Merton schools achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) in 2022 is 3.8 percentage points above the national average and 1.2 percentage points above the London average. There has however been a significant dip in national, London and Merton proportions of pupils achieving the GLD in 2021/2022 compared with the last two years in which there was published data. This reflects the unique circumstances this cohort of pupils experienced in Nursery and Reception as well as the changes in how their achievement was assessed and reported. For more information please see [page 15](#).
5. 80% of pupils reached the expected standard for phonics decoding in Merton, this is above both London and national averages. Although Merton outcomes represent a drop of three percentage points since 2019, this is less of a decline than that seen in London (six percentage points) and nationally (seven percentage points). For more information please see [page 21](#).
6. At Key Stage 1 (KS1), in reading and in maths performance remains slightly above London averages at both the expected standard and greater depth, and performance continues to be well above national averages. Performance in writing is above national averages, but is in line with or below London averages. However, post pandemic, in each subject, performance at the expected standard and at

greater depth has fallen in Merton, mirroring the trend in London and nationally. This reflects the disruption to pupils' learning caused by the pandemic. Pleasingly, performance in all three subjects at the Greater Depth standard ranks Merton highly in comparison with all other LAs (maths = 7<sup>th</sup> nationally, reading and writing = 16<sup>th</sup> nationally), and in comparison with its statistical neighbours and other Outer London boroughs in reading and maths. For more information please see [page 24](#).

7. At Key Stage 2 (KS2), the progress and attainment scores in each of reading, writing and mathematics are all above the national averages, and above or in line with London averages, with the exception of writing where the progress score and attainment at the Expected Standard is below London. The progress score in mathematics ranks Merton 13<sup>th</sup>. For more information please see [page 29](#).
8. Performance in Merton secondary schools at KS4 remains very strong. At 0.52, the Progress 8 score in Merton is well above national and London averages, 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 (53.6) is above the national and the London averages. Three Merton mainstream schools are just below the national average (Harris Academy Morden, St Mark's Academy and Raynes Park High School). The proportion of pupils achieving grades 9-4 in the EBacc subjects, including English and maths is above the local as well as the national average. This is one indication of the breadth of curriculum being offered in Merton schools at KS4. The proportion of students achieving a standard 9-4 pass in English and mathematics is in line with London average but above the national average. For more information, please see [page 39](#).
9. For KS5 qualifications the Average Point Score (APS) per entry is above the national averages for all qualification types. Whilst being above London averages for Tech Level and Applied General qualifications, outcomes for A level and Academic qualifications is just below. Merton's ranking in comparison with other LAs for Applied General qualifications has improved significantly (from 58th to 32nd), and the average grade is Distinction. For more information please see [page 44](#).
10. 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 moved to 5<sup>th</sup> best performance in England. 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 45](#).
11. This year the proportion of 16 – 17 year olds participating in education and training has increased by 0.5 percentage points, and continues a four-year upward trend (against a fluctuating picture nationally). Merton's performance is in the first quintile (best performance) in comparison with other Local Authorities in England. For more information please see [page 47](#).
12. Attendance is at lower levels nationally than before the Pandemic and remains a national challenge. The most recent data for overall pupil attendance shows that Merton's performance is above the national average and just below the London average. This follows a number of years where we have been above London. The picture is the same for persistent absence. Attendance in special schools, affected particularly by the pandemic and the ongoing requirements to self-isolate following contact with Covid cases, is lower than London and national. For more information please see [page 63](#).

13. Merton had no primary or special school permanent exclusions in 2021-2022. This has been true for a number of 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 has increased slightly but remains below the national average and in lines with London averages. The number of fixed term exclusions has risen slightly in primary schools and though the rate is below that seen nationally, is just above the London averages. The number of fixed term exclusions in secondary schools has risen slightly but is below London and national averages. The figures for fixed term exclusions in Special Schools are based on small cohorts, with individual exclusions therefore being recorded as a high percentage. Nevertheless the significant rise is concerning and is a focus for 2022/23. For more information please see [page 68](#).
  
14. For children who are electively home educated, following the steep rise in numbers in 2020/21, which was mirrored nationally, for which the impact of the pandemic was cited as a key reason, there has been a small drop this year. Nevertheless, numbers remain high and are well above pre-pandemic levels at both the primary and the secondary phase. Over the past decade numbers have risen by over 200%, with the larger rise being seen in the primary phase. The numbers of boys and girls being electively home educated are broadly similar. The numbers starting to be home educated in Reception and in Year 7 remain higher than in other year groups, resulting in overall spikes at the beginning of both the primary and secondary phases. For more information please see [page 72](#).

# Summary of Performance Information for all Key Stages

	Compared to Merton 2019	Compared to National 2022	2022 Outer London neighbours (quartile)	2022 Statistical neighbours (quartile)	2019 National Standing	2022 National Standing
<b>EYFS</b>						
Good Level of Development	-6.5	3.8↑			21 <sup>st</sup>	24 <sup>th</sup>
<b>KS1</b>						
Year 1 phonics	-3	5↑			45 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>
Expected Standard Reading	-8	4↑			11 <sup>th</sup>	19 <sup>th</sup>
Expected Standard Writing	-10	2↑			59 <sup>th</sup>	38 <sup>th</sup>
Expected Standard Mathematics	-7	4↑			20 <sup>th</sup>	18 <sup>th</sup>
Greater Depth Reading	-6	5↑			21 <sup>st</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>
Greater Depth Writing	-5	4↑			30 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>
Higher Standard Mathematics	-5	7↑			11 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>
<b>KS2</b>						
Expected Standard Reading	+1	5↑			13 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>
Expected Standard Writing (TA)	-10	=			54 <sup>th</sup>	70 <sup>th</sup>
Expected Standard Mathematics	-4	7↑			25 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>
Expected Standard Reading/Writing/Maths	-6	4↑			31 <sup>st</sup>	32 <sup>nd</sup>
High Score Reading	+1	5↑			19 <sup>th</sup>	22 <sup>nd</sup>
Greater Depth Standard Writing (TA)	-4	5↑			48 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>
High Score Mathematics	-2	10↑			15 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>
Higher Standard Reading/Writing/Maths	-3	4↑			19 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>
Progress Score Reading	-0.8	0.7↑			11 <sup>th</sup>	34 <sup>th</sup>
Progress Score Writing	-0.4	0.3↑			32 <sup>nd</sup>	60 <sup>th</sup>
Progress Score Mathematics	-0.1	1.5↑			12 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>
<b>KS4</b>						
Attainment 8 Score	+0.4	4.7↑			16 <sup>th</sup>	19 <sup>th</sup>
Progress 8 Score	-0.3	0.52↑			3 <sup>rd</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Grades 9-4 in English and maths	+3	7↑			33 <sup>rd</sup>	21 <sup>st</sup>
English Baccalaureate	+1	11↑			15 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>
<b>KS5</b>						
Average points per entry (A level)	+5.35	0.39↑			61 <sup>st</sup>	61 <sup>st</sup>
Average points per entry (Applied General)	+48	3.26↑			58 <sup>th</sup>	32 <sup>nd</sup>

## Exclusions

Permanent Exclusions – primary*	=	0.01↓			36 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>
Permanent Exclusions – secondary*	-0.17	0.03↓			21 <sup>st</sup>	39 <sup>th</sup>
Permanent Exclusions – special*	-0.27	0.03↓				1 <sup>st</sup>
Fixed Term Exclusions – primary*	-0.25	0.33↓			47 <sup>th</sup>	21 <sup>st</sup>
Fixed Term Exclusions – secondary*	-1.5	43.79↓			25 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>
Fixed Term Exclusions – special*	+8.27	17.63↑				107 <sup>th</sup>

## Attendance

Absence - primary	-2.1	0.3↑			25 <sup>th</sup>	
Absence – secondary	-2.5	1.5↑			4 <sup>th</sup>	
Absence – special	-3.4	0.5↓				
Persistent Absence - primary	+9.8	1.1↓			20 <sup>th</sup>	
Persistent Absence – secondary	+11.4	5↓			7 <sup>th</sup>	
Persistent Absence – special	+4.5	0.3↓				





There has been no published data for primary phase outcomes (with the exception of the phonics screening check for year 2 pupils) since 2019. Whilst secondary outcomes were published at headline level in 2020 and 2021, there can be no comparison between those figures and those from before the pandemic. Therefore,

2019 has been chosen as the year to compare 2022 performance with because that was the last year fully unaffected by the pandemic.

Arrows/plus or minus signs indicate performance relative to performance in 2019 (the 'Compared to 2019' column); or in comparison with national performance (in the 'Compared to National 2022' column). Please note that in the majority of cases upward arrows are positive, but in the case of exclusions and persistent absence relative to 2019 or national data, downward arrows indicate positive performance.

\*Please note that the rankings and quartile performance for exclusions data is for the Autumn 2021 only as data combining all three terms is not available.

**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. Aspects of attendance and exclusions are the areas of where Merton is below national averages.
- National rankings continue to be strong in particular in the progress measures at KS2 for reading and maths, and for GCSE.
- Merton's performance has dropped in most primary phase indicators in comparison with pre-pandemic performance (as has happened nationally), but risen in most secondary phase indicators (again mirroring the national picture).
- The quartile performance in relation to the Borough's statistical neighbours and to other Outer London boroughs identifies that although there have been some improvements, there have also been some relative drops in performance in comparison, identifying where further improvements could still be secured.

## Summary of Priorities for 2022/23

### 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) Continue to support school senior and middle leaders to prepare for inspection under the 2019 Ofsted Framework for Inspection.
- d) 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
- e) 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
- f) 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
- 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) Continue to work with strong local providers to support schools to improve early language development
- b) Continue to close the attainment gap so that similar proportions of boys and girls achieve a Good Level of Development
- c) Narrow the gap for children eligible for Free School Meals and improve outcomes for Black/African/Caribbean and Asian/Asian British children

### Primary Phase

- a) Further embed and improve primary writing outcomes at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, especially for boys.
- b) Further improve outcomes in the phonics screening check for boys, disadvantaged and Black pupils
- c) Support schools in addressing the oracy needs of pupils post-pandemic through support for schools including training and sharing examples of good practice
- d) Support schools to continue to embed a mastery approach to the teaching of mathematics which is inclusive of SEND pupils
- e) Improve outcomes for Black Caribbean and Black African pupils at all key stages and analyse the achievement of each of those groups separately.

- f) Further support schools to strengthen their pupil premium strategies and narrow the gaps for disadvantaged pupils.
- g) 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

### **Secondary Phase**

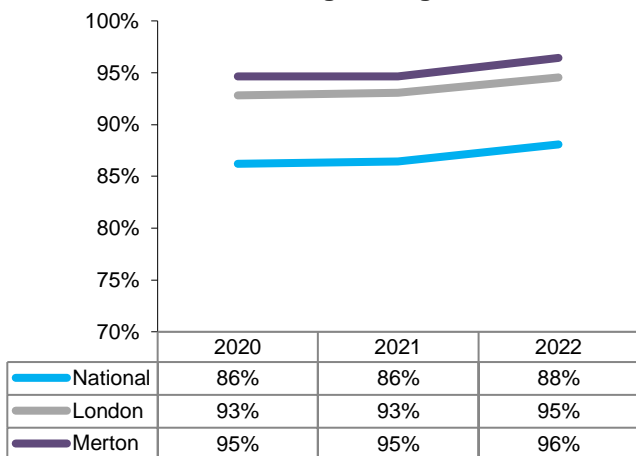
- a) Ensure all Merton secondary schools remain good or outstanding.
- b) Support pupils in Y7 who have not met the standard for reading at the end of KS2, building on the primary phase fluency projects, ensuring these strategies for developing reading fluency are used by teachers across the curriculum not just in English lessons.
- c) 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.
- d) Narrow the gaps for key groups at KS4: disadvantaged pupils, pupils in receipt of SEN support and Black pupils and those of mixed heritage.
- e) Focus on SEND NEET post 16 and set up a SEND employability forum.

### **Inclusion**

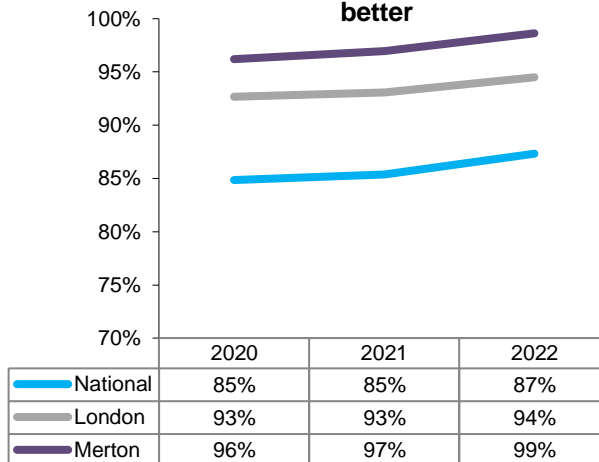
- a) To work with special schools to address lower attendance and higher suspension (fixed term exclusion) rates
- b) To work with all schools to implement the Government's proposed new attendance guidance prior to full implementation in September 2023 in particular focus on developing an approach to severe absence
- c) To develop an offer for emotionally based school avoidance in line with the I-thrive model
- d) To develop an approach across all school support services to build ordinarily available SEND capacity in schools.
- e) To establish a new site for Merton Medical Education Service to expand the offer to children out of school due to their medical needs

## 2. Ofsted Outcomes and School Improvement

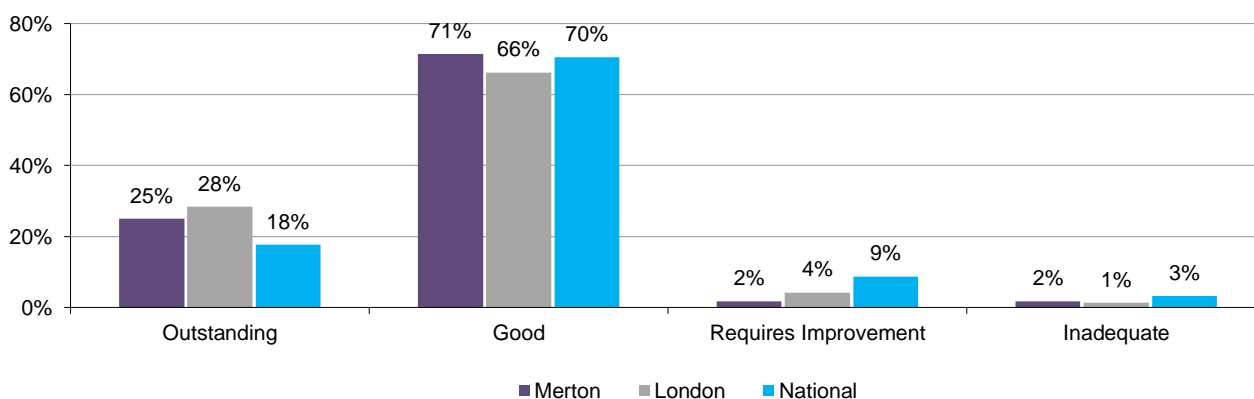
**Ofsted Overall Effectiveness : 31 August**  
% of schools graded good or better



**Ofsted Overall Effectiveness : 31 August**  
% pupils in schools graded good or better



**School Ofsted: Overall Effectiveness - August**



- 2.1 The proportion of schools judged to be good or better in Merton rose from 95% to 96% over the course of the academic year. 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. Two of the Borough’s 44 primary schools were not yet judged to be good or better as of August 2022. This means that 95% of primary schools were judged to be good or better at that point, which is above the national average of 89% 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).
- 2.2 The proportion of *pupils* in schools judged to be good or better rose by two percentage points to 99%, which is above both the national and London averages.
- 2.3 During 2021/2022, ten LA maintained schools and academies in Merton were inspected. This is a lower number than in usual years, with Ofsted’s ability to inspect still affected by the pandemic during this



year. All were judged to be at least good. Ursuline High School and St Mary's RC Primary School were both judged to good through a graded inspection; Links Primary School, Joseph Hood Primary School, William Morris Primary School, Pelham Primary School and St Teresa's Primary School all retained their good judgements through 'ungraded' inspections (Section 8); The Priory Primary school retained its good judgement in an ungraded inspection and would receive a graded inspection in the following academic year; West Wimbledon moved to a good judgement (having previously been judged to require improvement); and Rutlish School retained its outstanding judgement in an ungraded inspection, but will receive a full inspection within a year.

2.4 Where schools were judged to be good or better, strengths highlighted in the reports included the following:

- Pupils are proud of their school. They confidently explain how their school values encourage them to make the right choices.
- Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. Every pupil has access to the school's broad and rich curriculum.
- Pupils talk in detail about their learning and what they know and remember.
- Pupils achieve very well across the curriculum.
- Pupils have many opportunities to learn beyond the classroom.
- This is a happy school that sits at the heart of the community.
- Leaders celebrate individuality and diversity through their vision of 'strength through difference'.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors and leaders pay great attention to pupils' well-being. Pupils show respect and kindness towards each other.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well. On the rare occasion that there is any off-task behaviour, staff deal with it swiftly and effectively.

2.5 Next steps for improvement included the following:

- In a few cases, aspects of the school's curriculum intent and implementation are not embedded securely and consistently.
- Sometimes, teaching does not identify and revisit the knowledge and concepts that pupils need to be secure with.
- On occasion, some weaker readers are given books that contain sounds with which they are not confident. This means that they are not able to practise reading with fluency.
- Planning in a few subjects is not fully broken down into steps that support teachers to plan effectively.
- Sometimes, pupils with SEND do not get enough individual support during whole class sessions to be clear about their learning.
- In some subjects, middle leaders are in early stages of development and receiving support from senior leaders.

## 2021/22 School Improvement priorities, impact, and key actions taken

2.6

**Priority:**

Following the resumption of Ofsted inspections in September 2021, to continue to ensure all schools are judged to be at least good when inspected by Ofsted.

**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:**

All schools inspected during the year achieved at least a good judgement. All three schools which had Support and Challenge groups in place and which were also inspected by Ofsted during the year received at least good judgements.

2.7

**Priority:**

To maintain the ambition that as many schools as are able should be judged outstanding by Ofsted, including by supporting schools currently judged as outstanding, and particularly those that have not been inspected for many years, to prepare for inspection.

**Action taken to secure improvement:**

The achievement of an outstanding judgement is now much harder under the current inspection framework, with Ofsted's stated aim that it expects there to be fewer outstanding schools as a result of changed criteria. Schools with current judgements of good or requires improvement are always challenged through the Council's School Improvement Strategy to strive towards outstanding outcomes. By virtue of the fact that schools on the verge of being outstanding are so because they require little if no intensive support, the work of the Council's officers was very different in these schools.

**Impact:**

Ursuline High School achieved outstanding judgements for 'Behaviour and Attitudes', 'Personal Development' and for its 6<sup>th</sup> form. St Mary's Primary School achieved an outstanding judgement for 'Behaviour and Attitudes'.

2.8

**Priority:**

In line with Merton's SEND Strategy, and underpinned by the Safety Valve plan, enable schools to support pupils with SEND to achieve the best outcomes in the least restrictive environment.

**Action taken to secure improvement:**

Significant work was undertaken in the area of SEND across the Local Authority during 2021/22, and this has been regularly reported to the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In particular the Council's investment in additional capacity has meant that SENDIS and School Improvement teams have been better able to support teachers and leaders in schools.

The Merton SENCO forums (for schools, and for Early Years settings) are regularly well attended, with well-planned agendas, overseen by the SENCO working group, and which address the needs of pupils and schools. Schools are able to access a rich range of Professional Development opportunities provided by the LA and by MSTA.

**Impact:**

Outcomes for pupils with SEND remain strong in comparison with similar groups nationally at statutory points of assessment, and in most cases are above national averages.

This work will continue in 2022/23 and beyond in line with the expected publication of the Government's response to its Green Paper consultation, and the aims of objectives of Merton's SEND Strategy (which will be refreshed in 2023).

2.9

**Priority:** In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, to focus on the wellbeing of pupils, staff and leaders.

**Action taken to secure improvement:**

The arrangements established during the pandemic - for ensuring up to date communication, information sharing and identifying where school leaders were experiencing significant pressures – were sustained in 2021/2022. There were brief weekly meetings of primary cluster headteacher representatives and of secondary heads when they could hear ongoing updates from Public Health about local infection rates, outbreaks and the pupil vaccination programmes. There was a continuation of a regular email (gradually moving from daily to weekly) so that national pandemic guidance from the DfE and Public Health were immediately accessible.

The role of MEP Inspectors, have well-established links with headteachers and Chairs of Governors in their group of schools, continued to be important in sharing concerns and pressures with the Education Senior Leaders.

Regular meetings with and support for school Mental Health leads enabled schools to maintain a focus on pupil and staff wellbeing. All schools are part of a Mental Health in Schools cluster. These cluster meetings, plans and support have focused in the wellbeing of children and staff. Many schools included this as a priority within their school development plans.

**Impact:**

School leadership sustained their focus on school improvement, standards and the return to statutory assessments and tests, and on inspection readiness, whilst managing high levels of staff absence and the impact upon coverage of classes and keeping the school open for all pupils. Schools deployed specialist trained staff, including ELSAs and mental health leads, to ensure that pupils' mental health and their anxieties about returning to school were identified and school-based and external support matched to needs.

**Priority: Equalities:**

- To maintain the momentum in relation to race equality in Merton schools.
- To support schools in developing their strategies to promote diversity, particularly listening to pupils and acting on the outcomes and developing monitoring systems.
- To maintain the momentum addressing race equality in schools, and to promote all aspects of equality in line with the Equality Duty

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

The **Black Lives Matter and Equalities Forum** met every half term throughout the academic year and have had presentations by Merton school leaders, pupil groups and external guest speakers.

The **Equality Adviser** has led termly network meetings for school Equality Leads

A **Conference for Merton secondary pupils** was held in autumn term 2021 and there were further meetings with a representative group of pupils which resulted in the publication of a manifesto shared with the Black Lives Matter and Equalities Forum

An end of year **Race Equality conference for Merton school staff** attended by Cllr Sally Kenny and Cllr Usaama Kaweesa with key note speakers Laura Henry-Allain MBE and Professor Paul Miller PhD. Workshops included 'From powerful protests to Champions of change' – Headteacher Alison Jerrard and Pupil cultural Ambassadors, Richards Lodge High School - and by Viv Grant – Integrity coaching

Equaliteach training for school governors that has covered '**unconscious bias**' and actions governor panels can take to mitigate the degree to which bias influences decisions made in recruitment, progression and disciplinary decisions.

**Impact:**

Evaluative feedback from forum members confirmed that the forum had provided:

- access to a wider range of 'voices' leading training who spoke on Equalities from their lived experiences and from a highly qualified professional and/or or academic background
- research-led influence on work in schools and services including the way colleagues interact and engage with parents and young people
- the work of The Black Curriculum had provided challenged thinking and improved curriculum intent although pace and impact had been variable and limited by the capacity of the external team to fulfil demand

Through the Equalities Network

- school staff have learnt about new EDI initiatives and current knowledge around different protected characteristics
- have shared good practice opportunities

**Networks for school leaders – Equalities, Inclusion and Diversity (EID); Pupil Premium; English as an additional language**

The termly EID network meetings provide school leaders with updates on statutory advice and guidance, reference to the LA Black Lives Matter and Diversity strategy, advice from external organisations, liaison with local agencies and partners, exemplification of current good practice and current research nationally and locally, access to resources.

The agendas for the termly **EAL network** meeting have included a focus on new arrivals and assessment of EAL progress. Themes covered this year have included Understanding EAL pupils, Recognising the key characteristics of English language learners to best shape provision, the fundamentals of effective teaching for EAL pupils in mainstream classes, Practical tips to adapt lessons to meet the needs of EAL pupils.

The termly **Pupil Premium (PP) network** provides opportunities to network with other Secondary PP leads and discuss good practice for evaluating the evidence of the effectiveness of the PPG in school. The Network reviews the impact and effectiveness of a range of activities and strategies widely used nationally and locally to diminish the difference between those entitled to PP and Others.

**Priority:**

In preparation for the education White Paper in 2022, to ensure that partnership working through Attain, and with the new teaching School Hub, the Merton Special Training Alliance and Teach Wimbledon, provides strong strategic direction for schools in Merton.

**Action taken to secure improvement:**

Partnership work continues to flourish both to support recruitment of teachers and to provide excellent professional development opportunities as part of the DfE golden thread of career development in teaching.

**Teach Wimbledon** is a partnership of 16 schools across Merton: 6 secondary schools (Ursuline, Ricards Lodge, Wimbledon college, Rutlish, Raynes Park and St. Marks Academy) and 10 primary. 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. As the accrediting body for trainees at Teach Wimbledon, the University of Roehampton has a strong and well-established relationship. As our local university, many trainee students, PGCE students and teachers come from Roehampton. Merton accesses support from Roehampton in the development of its school training programme, offering particular support for curriculum development.

A number of schools have now started to access routes into teaching through the use of the apprenticeship levy. Currently this partnership is focused with Coventry University, but this is likely to expand in the future to other providers.

The school improvement team has a close working relationship with the newly established 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.

**Attain has commissioned and funded the following initiatives:**

- 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.

**Impact:**

Teach Wimbledon provides 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.

Teach Wimbledon provides the largest cohort of trainees working with the University of Roehampton and over the last 6 years the number of applicants has increased year on year – with 44 applications in

2019 - 2020, to 124 in 2021 – 2022. The impact of Merton’s partnership with Teach Wimbledon has included:

- Increases in applicants for non-salaried places on the Teach Wimbledon programme.
- Securing staff for shortage places in secondary school – including science and MFL.
- Providing a wider set of routes to access ‘getting into teaching’.

The new 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.

### **School Improvement Priorities for 2022/23**

- 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
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- e) 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
- f) 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
- g) Ensure that safeguarding vigilance is a strength of our schools and that they work effectively with the Hub and Early Help

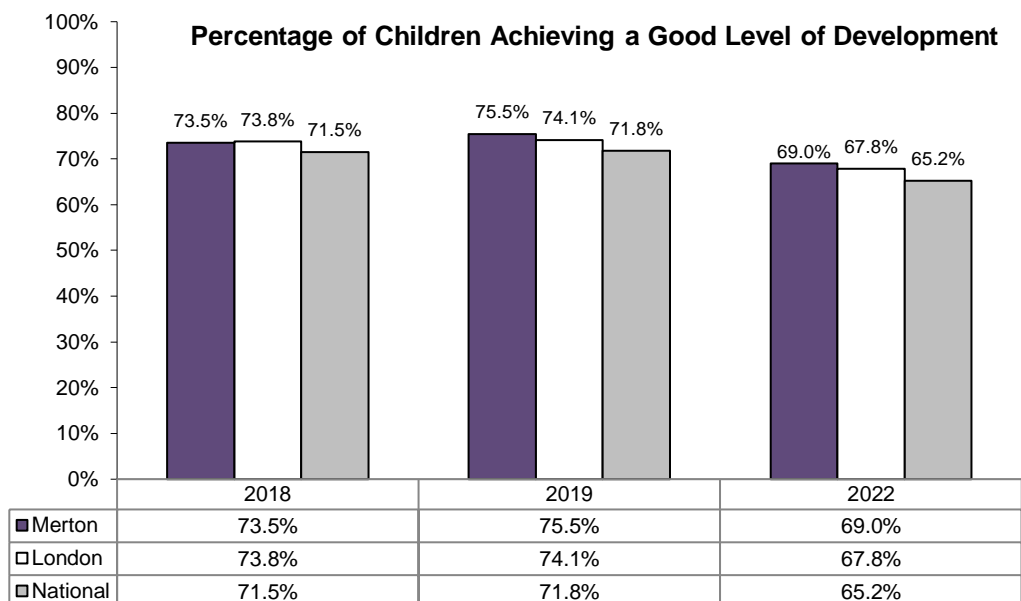
# 3. Achievement of Merton Pupils

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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 first 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. The DfE has therefore confirmed that it is not possible to directly compare 2021/22 assessment outcomes with earlier years.
- 3.1.9 These are also the first published statistics since 2018/19, as the 2019/20 and 2020/21 data collections were cancelled due to coronavirus (COVID-19). During the academic year when this 2021/22 cohort was in Reception class, schools locally and nationally were still experiencing infection outbreaks, often significant pupil and staff absences and, in some schools, closures of year groups for a period of days. This cohort of children will have experienced interruptions to the provision of their EYFS entitlement and their opportunities to develop socially and emotionally.

## EYFSP - headline performance information



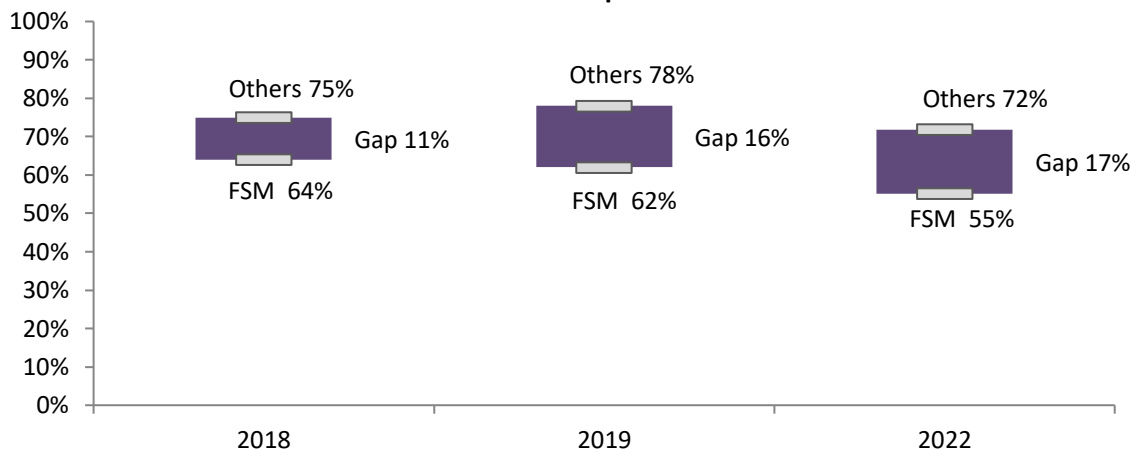
3.1.10 The proportion of children in Merton schools achieving a Good Level of Development in 2022 is 3.8 percentage points above the national average and broadly in line with the London average. The significant dip in national, London and Merton percentages of pupils at GLD in 2021/2022 compared with the last two years in which there was published data (in the region of 6.6ppts to 6.3 ppts) reflects the unique circumstances this cohort of pupils experienced in Nursery and Reception 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	2226	69%	68%	65%	68%	66%	63%
<b>Gender</b>							
Female	1086	75%	74%	72%	74%	72%	71%
Male	1140	64%	62%	59%	62%	59%	57%
Gap		11%	12%	13%	12%	13%	14%
<b>Free School Meals</b>							
Free School Meals	386	55%	56%	49%	54%	54%	47%
All other pupils	1840	72%	70%	69%	71%	68%	67%
Gap		17%	-14%	-20%	17%	-14%	-20%
<b>Special Educational Needs (SEN)</b>							
No Special Educational Needs	1955	76%	74%	71%	75%	72%	69%
SEN Support	162	25%	26%	23%	24%	25%	22%
SEN (with Statement or EHC plan)	66	2%	5%	4%	2%	4%	3%
<b>Ethnic Group</b>							
White	1158	71%	70%	66%	70%	68%	65%
Asian/Asian British	451	70%	71%	65%	70%	68%	62%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	201	62%	62%	61%	62%	60%	58%
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	300	74%	71%	67%	74%	69%	65%
Other ethnic group	53	57%	59%	55%	55%	57%	53%
Unclassified	63	37%	51%	50%	35%	49%	48%

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



3.1.11 At the GLD performance measure, girls achieve broadly in line with and boys slightly above the London averages; 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 2022 the percentage of children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) achieving a GLD has fallen by 7ppts compared with the last published results in 2019 and the performance of their non-FSM peers (Other) has fallen by 6ppts. The gap between FSM and Other pupils has widened very slightly and is

3ppts wider than the London FSM/Other gap. Narrowing this gap remains a priority for improvement in 2022/2023.

3.1.13 The performance of Merton children in receipt of SEN support is similar to the London average but the performance of pupils with EHCPs is 3 percentage points below.

3.1.14 The ethnic groups with the largest representation of pupils in the Merton EYFSP, (White British, Asian/Asian British, Black African Caribbean/Black British, Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups) outperformed children of the same ethnic heritage nationally and in line with their London peers, with the exception of Black Caribbean pupils where performance was in line with both the London and national averages.

## 2021/22 Early Years priorities, impact, and key actions taken

These priorities were set before the 2021/2022 EYFS Reforms and the identification of a pandemic.

3.1.15

**Priority:**

To continue to support schools in the development of the new EYFS requirements, maintaining a focus on early language development post pandemic.

**Action taken to secure improvement:**

EYFS leaders' termly seminars included a focus on the roll-out of the new EYFS Profile using examples of those who were Early Adopters. Strong EYFS practice, identified by MEP Inspectors, was disseminated through the Early Years Adviser. Support continued through remote meetings with priority schools.

**Impact:**

Early Years leaders have an enhanced understanding of planning and delivery of the EYFS Profile.

3.1.16

**Priority:**

To support schools with the EYFS statutory assessment requirements, including the use of exemplification material once this is produced by the DFE.

**Action taken to secure improvement:**

The Early Years Adviser and LA Primary Assessment lead worked alongside Early Adopters to lead training for EYFS leaders with a particular focus on assessment arrangements.

The Early Years Adviser supported Early Adopters and cluster groups in their moderation of EYFS teacher assessment and in developing their understanding of new thresholds.

**Impact:**

SIMS assessment forms are in line with the new EYFS profile.

3.1.17

**Priority:**

To continue to work with both FS leaders and subject leaders in KS1 and KS2 to improve the subject knowledge required in the early years of education so that pupils move to KS1 with the prerequisite skills needed to make progress in the primary phase

**Actions taken to secure impact:**

An increased focus on early reading and the adoption of recognised systematic synthetic phonics programmes (SSPs) has ensured an increased focus on language development. Many Merton schools are currently accessing the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Phonics Scheme, including guidance on the delivery of 3 reading focused sessions during the week. Divided into comprehension, prosody and decoding, pupils are supported in a deepening of their vocabulary as matched books are used during these sessions.

Early Years training has also encouraged greater use of funded and researched programmes focusing on vocabulary acquisition. Schools continue to access the funded NELI programme and others such as the Shrec, Education Endowment Foundation resources, strategies to focus on high quality – high impact adult interactions.

**Impact:**

Overall impact has seen LA averages for the communication strand within the EYFS profile above national averages (LA at 82.4% National at 79.5%).

There is a greater awareness and planning by all EYFS Subject Leaders in accessing resources to support early vocabulary acquisitions, which is supported through visits to priority schools by LA Early Years Advisers.

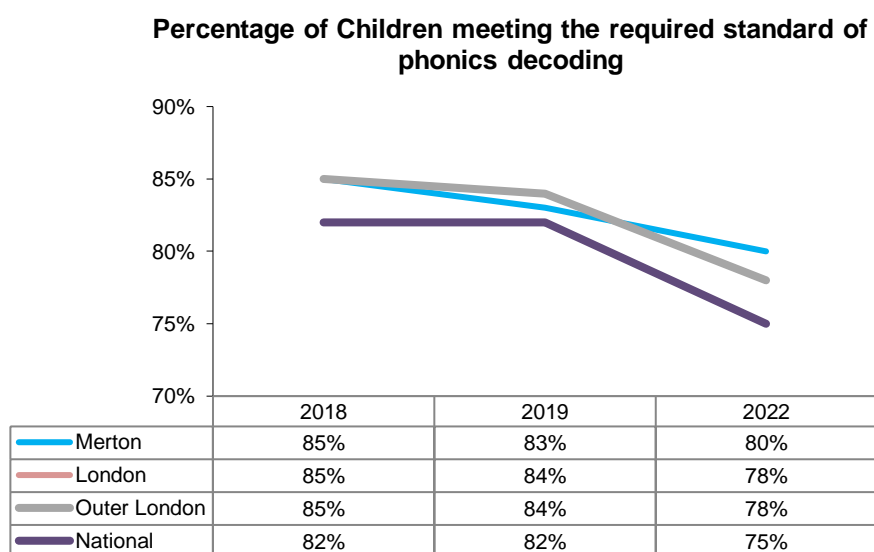
## **Early Years Priorities for 2022/2023**

- a) Continue to work with strong local providers (including the English hub) to support schools to improve early language development.
- b) Continue to close the attainment gap so that similar proportions of boys and girls achieve a Good Level of Development
- c) Improve outcomes for children eligible for Free School Meals; and for Black Caribbean, Black African and Black British children.

## 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 first 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.
- 3.2.3 These statistics cover the attainment of year 1 pupils who took the assessments in summer 2022. These pupils experienced unprecedented disruption to their learning during the pandemic.

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

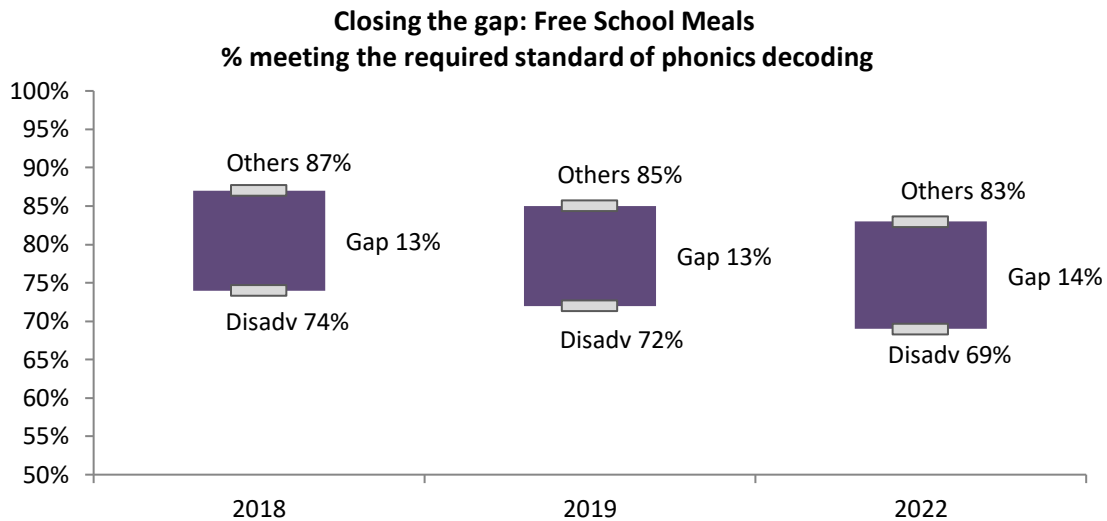


- 3.2.4 80% of pupils reached the expected standard for phonics decoding in Merton, this is slightly above London and above national averages. Although Merton outcomes represent a drop of three percentage points since 2019, this is less of a decline than for London (6 percentage points) and nationally (7 percentage points).

## 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	2064	80%	78%	75%
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	980	82%	81%	79%
Male	1084	78%	75%	72%
Gap		4%	6%	7%
<b>Disadvantaged</b>				
Disadvantaged pupils	480	69%	69%	62%
Non disadvantaged	1584	83%	81%	79%
Gap		14%	-12%	-17%
<b>Special Educational Needs (SEN)</b>				
No Special Educational Needs	1716	87%	85%	82%
SEN Support	223	52%	52%	44%
SEN (with Statement or EHC plan)	84	40%	24%	19%
<b>Ethnic Group</b>				
White	1053	81%	79%	76%
Asian	447	85%	82%	79%
Black	198	71%	75%	76%
Mixed	254	83%	80%	77%
Any other ethnic group	44	75%	74%	71%
Unclassified	68	53%	59%	54%

\* Disadvantaged is FSM



3.2.5 The performance of girls is broadly in line with the London average and the performance of boys is six percentage points above national and three above the London average. The gap between boys and girls is four percentage points (smaller than the gaps seen nationally and locally).

3.2.6 Outcomes for both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupil groups have decreased by 5 ppts and 4ppts respectively since 2019; outcomes for disadvantaged pupils continue to be below their non-disadvantaged peers – a gap of 14%. Since 2019 the gap has increased slightly. In 2022 the

performance of disadvantaged pupils is in line with the London average and above the national. Non-disadvantaged pupils' performance is two percentage points higher than London and therefore the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers is two percentage points greater than London but smaller than the national gap.

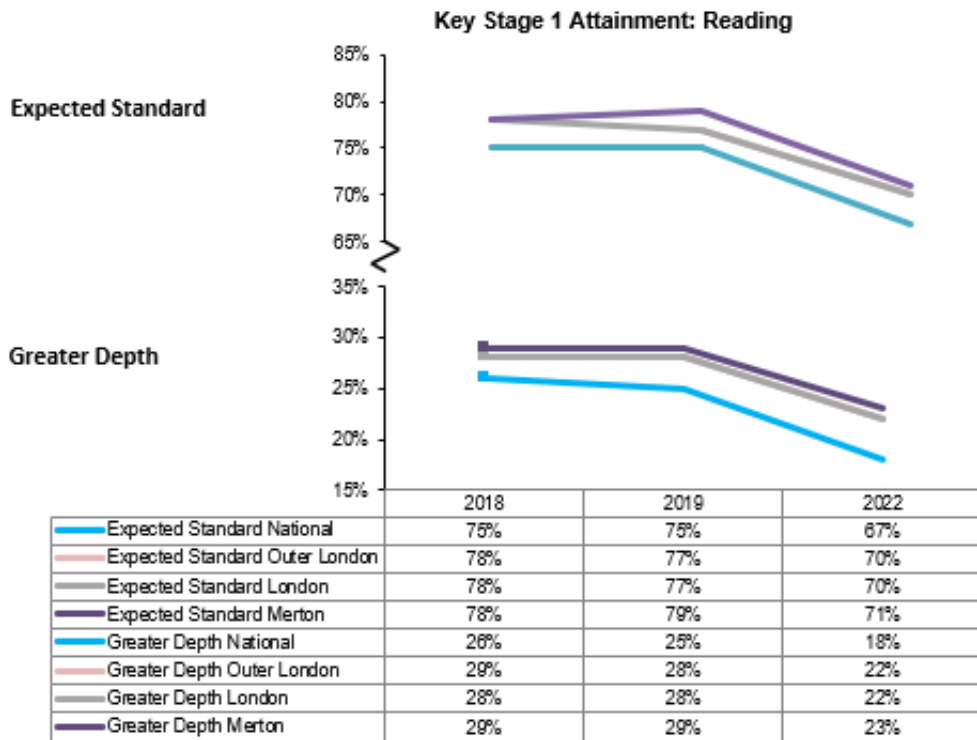
3.2.7 The gap between pupils eligible for SEN support and their peers remains very wide (35 percentage points). It is narrower than the gap seen nationally but in line with London. 40% of pupils with EHCPs reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check, which is significantly higher (16 percentage points) than the same cohort in London and 21 pts above national.

3.2.8 The largest ethnic groups are White, Asian, Black and the Mixed ethnic 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, except for the group identified as Black pupils. The percentage of Black pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check is four percentage points less than London and five pts less than the national group. Raising outcomes for Black pupils is a priority for 2022/2023 and further consistent analysis of the data is required.

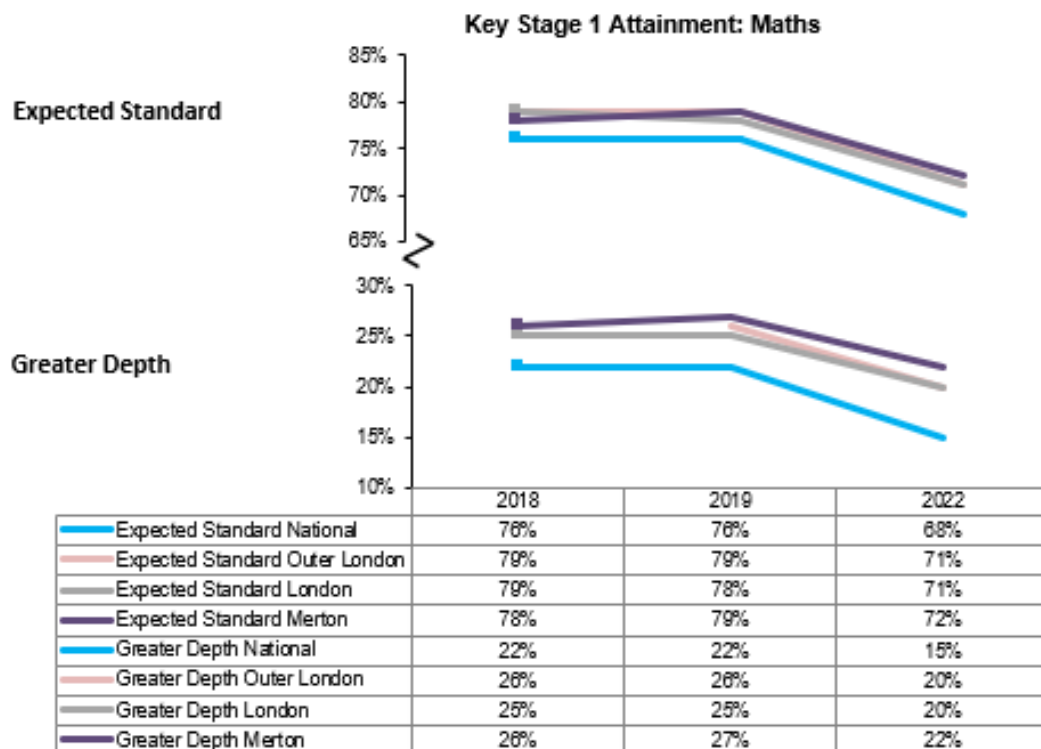
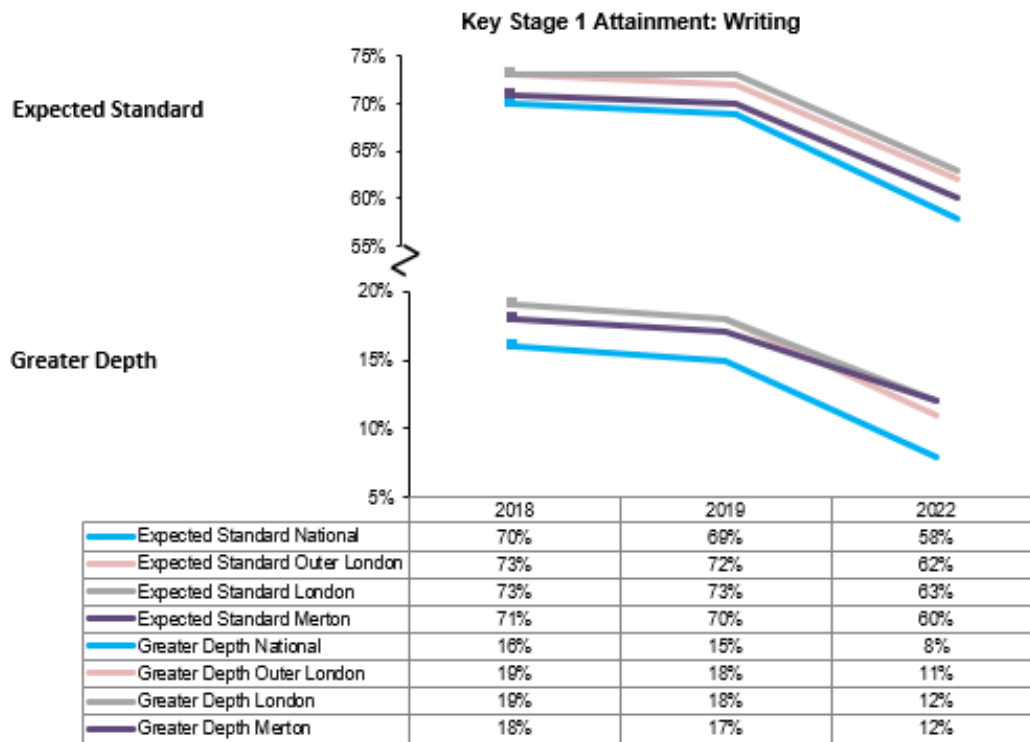
## Key Stage 1: performance information and analysis

- 3.3.1 These are the first key stage 1 attainment statistics since 2019, because assessments were cancelled in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic. These statistics cover the attainment of year 2 pupils who took these assessments in summer 2022. These pupils experienced disruption to their learning during 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





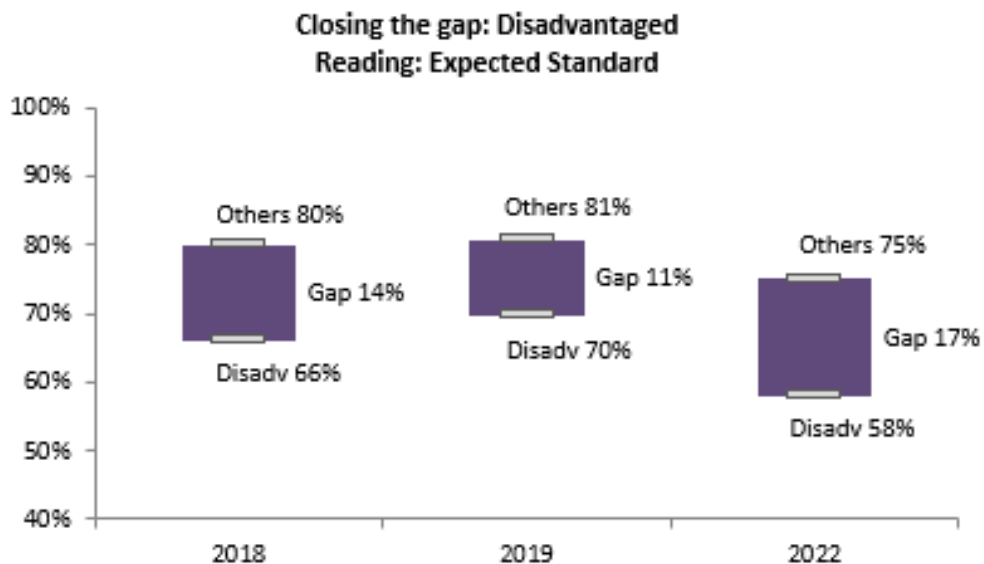


3.3.3 In reading and in maths performance remains broadly in line with London averages at both the expected standard and greater depth, and performance continues to be well above national averages. Performance in writing is above the national average, but is in line with or below London averages. However post-pandemic, in each subject, performance at the expected standard and at greater depth has fallen in Merton, mirroring the trend in London and nationally. This reflects the disruption to pupils' learning caused by the pandemic.

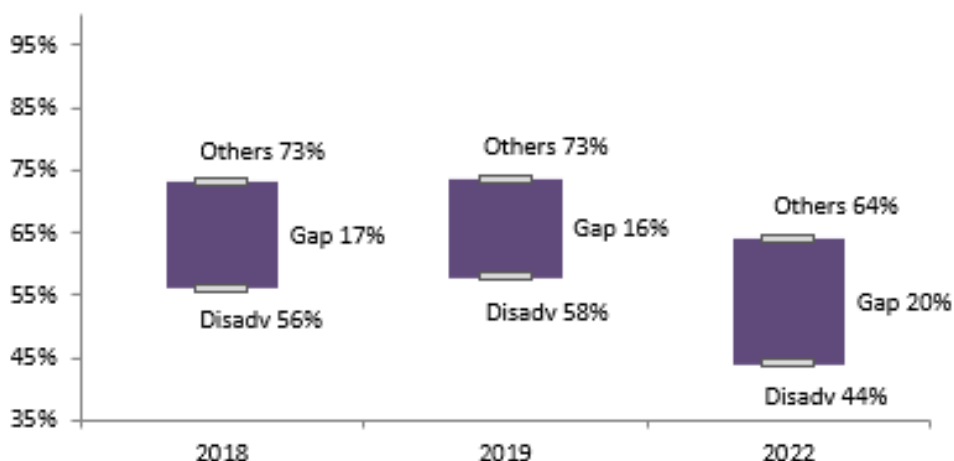
3.3.4 The greatest drop has been in writing where the percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard fell by ten percentage points, as in London, whilst nationally there was an eleven percent fall. At Greater Depth, outcomes fell by five percentage points in Merton in comparison with six percentage points nationally.

### KS1 - main pupil groups and analysis

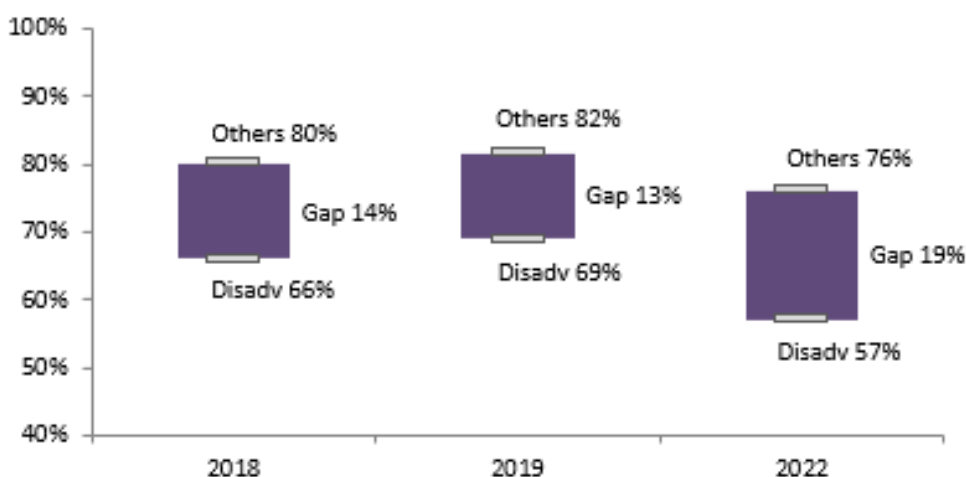
Contextual Groups	Number of Pupils	% reaching the expected standard in reading			% reaching the expected standard in writing			% reaching the expected standard in maths		
		Merton	London	National	Merton	London	National	Merton	London	National
All Pupils	2255	71%	70%	67%	60%	63%	58%	72%	71%	68%
<b>Gender</b>										
Female	1042	75%	74%	71%	66%	68%	64%	72%	71%	67%
Male	1213	68%	67%	63%	54%	57%	52%	72%	71%	68%
Gap		7%	7%	8%	12%	11%	12%	0%	0%	-1%
<b>Disadvantaged</b>										
Disadvantaged	521	58%	59%	51%	44%	50%	41%	57%	59%	52%
All other pupils	1734	75%	74%	72%	64%	67%	63%	76%	75%	73%
Gap		17%	15%	21%	20%	17%	22%	19%	16%	21%
<b>Special Educational Needs (SEN)</b>										
No Special Educational Needs	1818	81%	78%	75%	69%	71%	66%	81%	79%	75%
SEN Support	300	39%	39%	30%	21%	29%	20%	39%	42%	33%
SEN (with Statement or EHC plan)	100	19%	13%	12%	12%	9%	7%	22%	16%	14%
<b>Ethnic Group</b>										
White	1106	74%	71%	67%	61%	62%	57%	75%	72%	68%
Asian	519	72%	74%	69%	65%	68%	62%	77%	76%	71%
Black	224	65%	69%	67%	51%	60%	59%	61%	66%	64%
Mixed	278	71%	73%	70%	57%	65%	60%	69%	72%	69%
Any other ethnic group	68	63%	62%	59%	49%	55%	52%	62%	65%	62%
Unclassified	60	38%	49%	48%	33%	43%	40%	47%	52%	50%



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



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



- 3.3.5 Girls outperformed boys in reading and by a 12 percentage point gap in writing; in maths there is no gender gap.
- 3.3.6 The gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers has widened in all subjects and this is mirrored in London and national outcomes. The gaps are narrower than those seen nationally but slightly wider in comparison with London. The widest gap is in writing.
- 3.3.7 In reading and in maths, non-SEN pupils outperformed their peers in London and nationally but children eligible for SEN support performed similarly to their London peers and therefore the Merton gaps are wider (three percentage points in reading and five in maths). In writing, outcomes for both SEN support and non-SEN groups are below their London counterparts and the gap is wider than nationally.
- 3.3.8 The small cohort of 100 pupils with an EHCP achieved better than their peers across London and nationally in each subject and particularly in reading and maths.

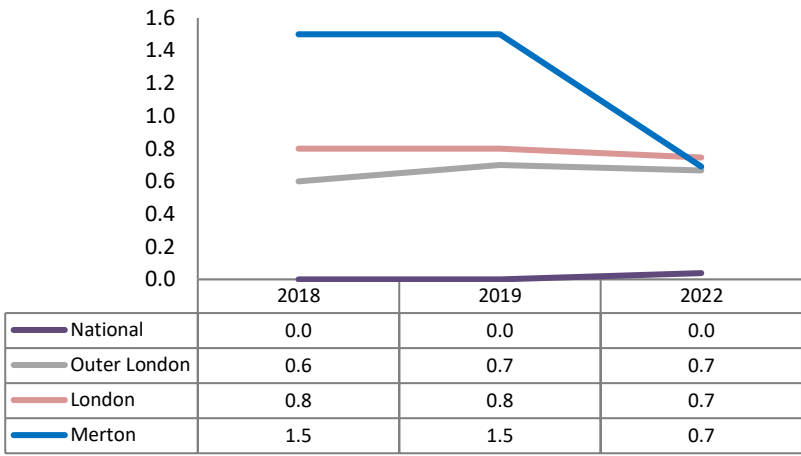
3.3.9 For the two largest ethnic groups at this key stage (White and Asian) performance is broadly similar to London averages for the same groups in reading and in maths. However, the outcomes for Black pupils are slightly below those for London and particularly in writing.

## Key Stage 2: performance information and analysis

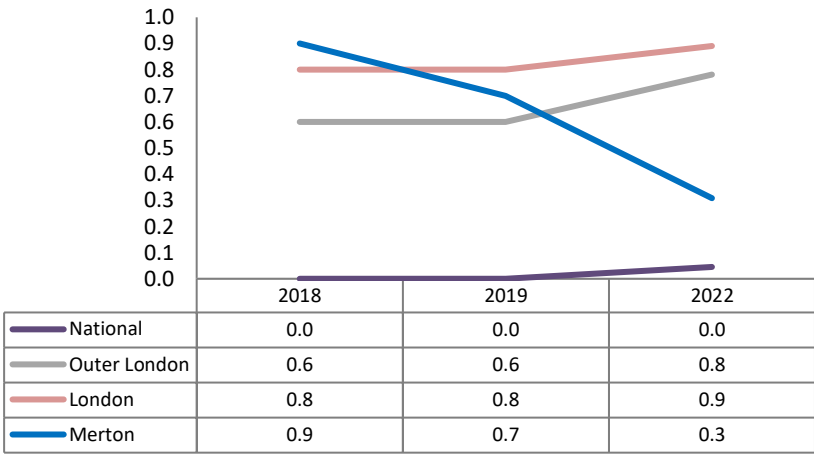
- 3.4.1 KS2 standard assessment tests and tasks in reading, writing and maths were re-introduced in 2022, having been cancelled in summer 2020 and again in 2021 because of the pandemic. These pupils experienced disruption to their learning during the pandemic, particularly at the end of year 4 and in year 5. 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. In 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

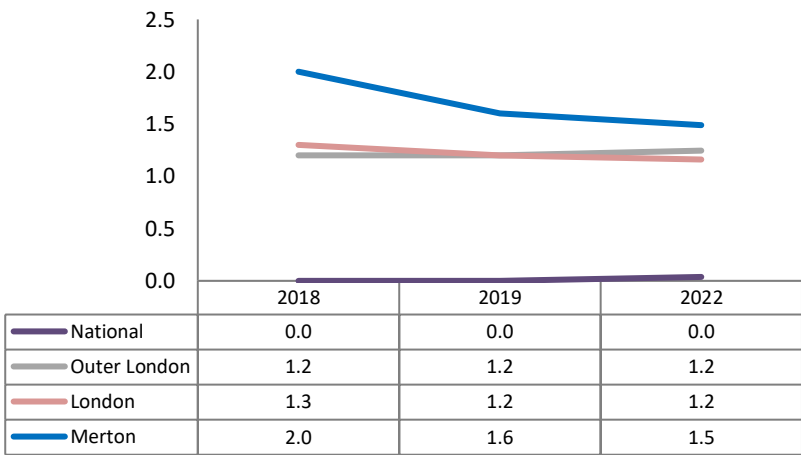
**Expected Progress: Reading**



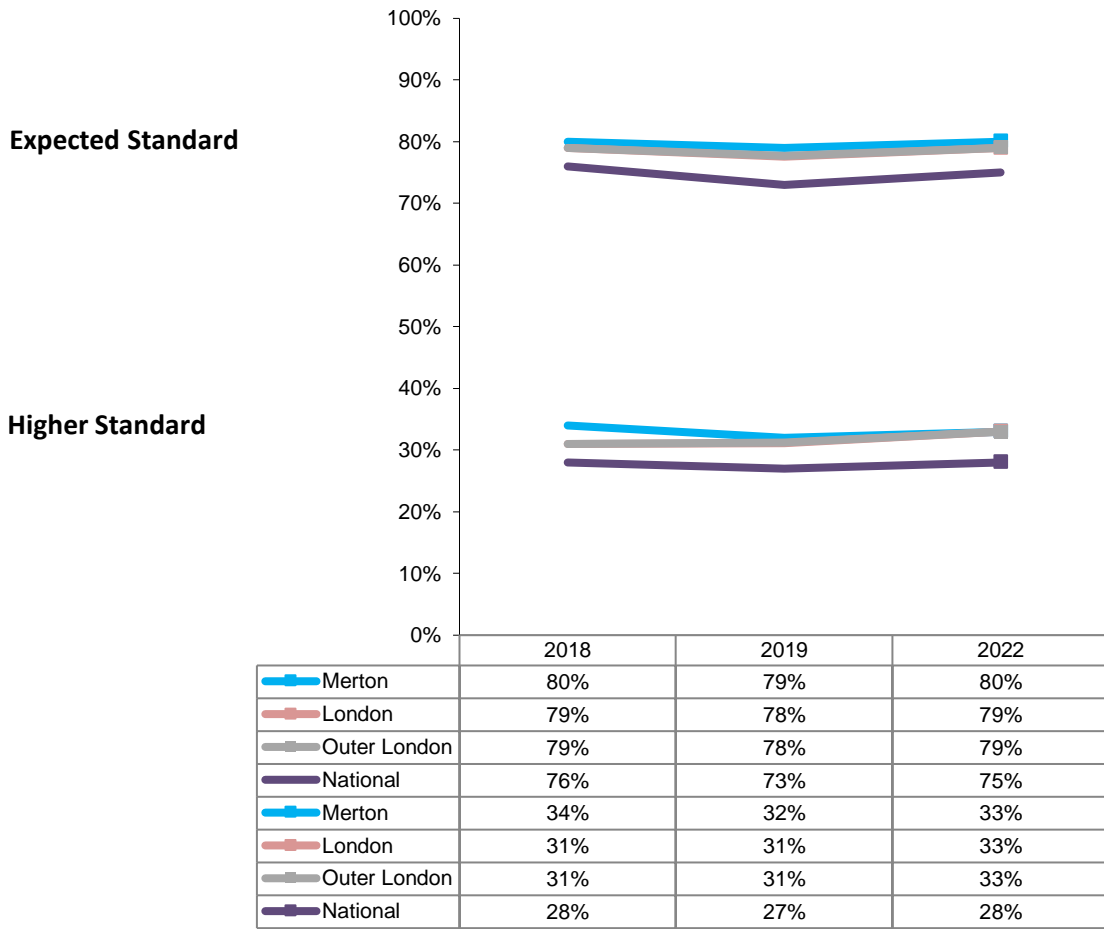
**Expected Progress: Writing**



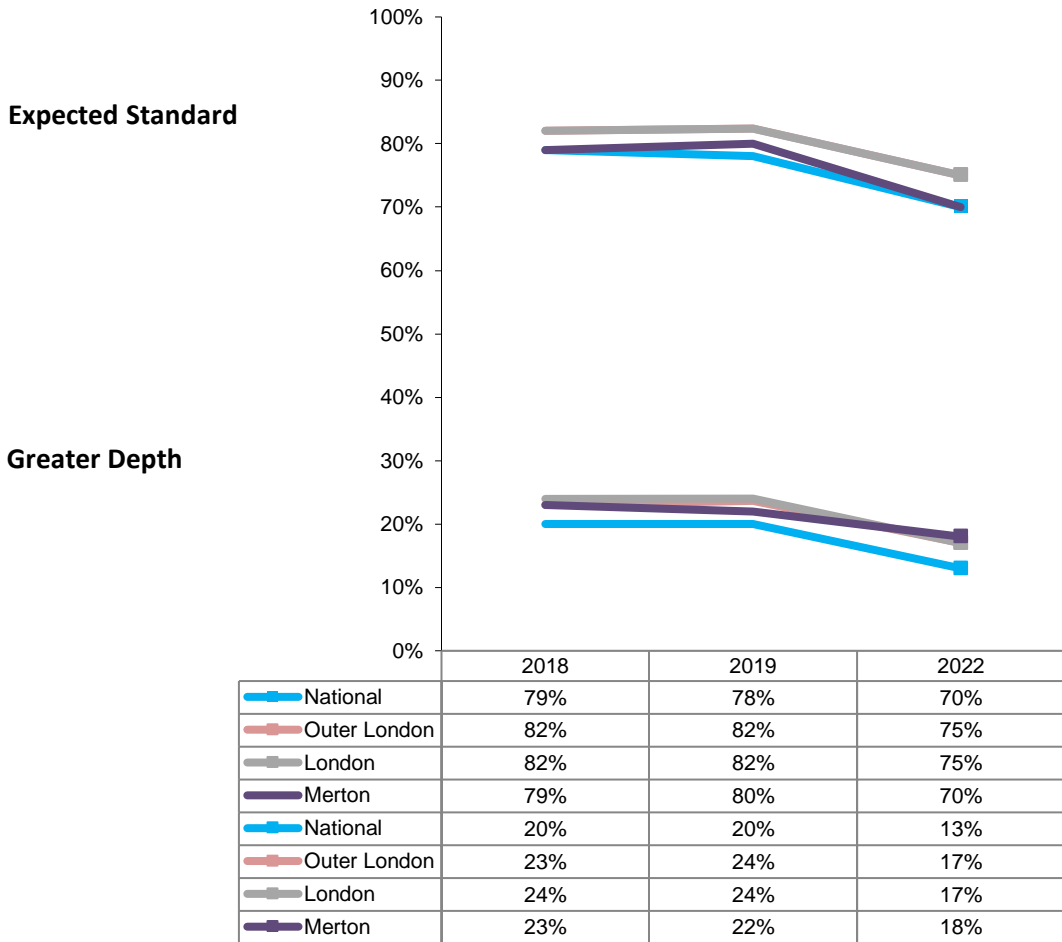
**Expected Progress: Maths**



### Key Stage 2 Attainment (2018-2022): Reading

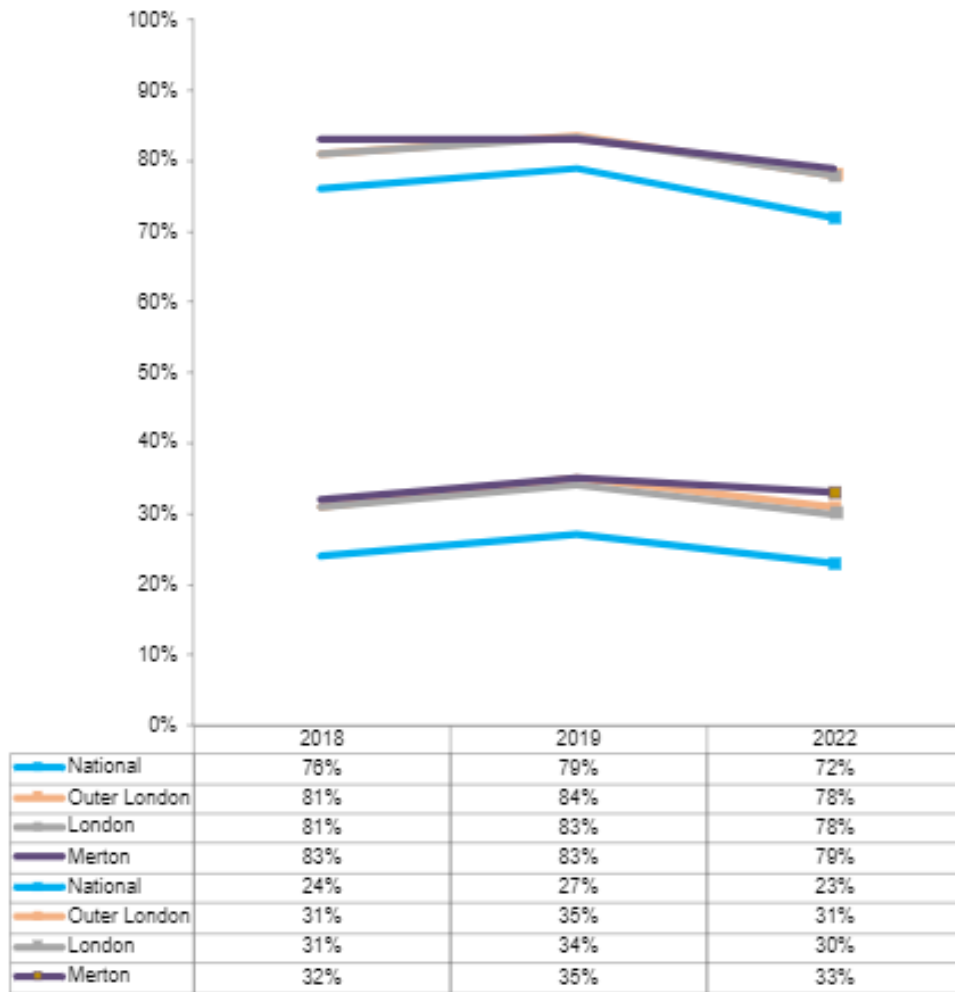


### Key Stage 2 Attainment (2018-2022): Writing

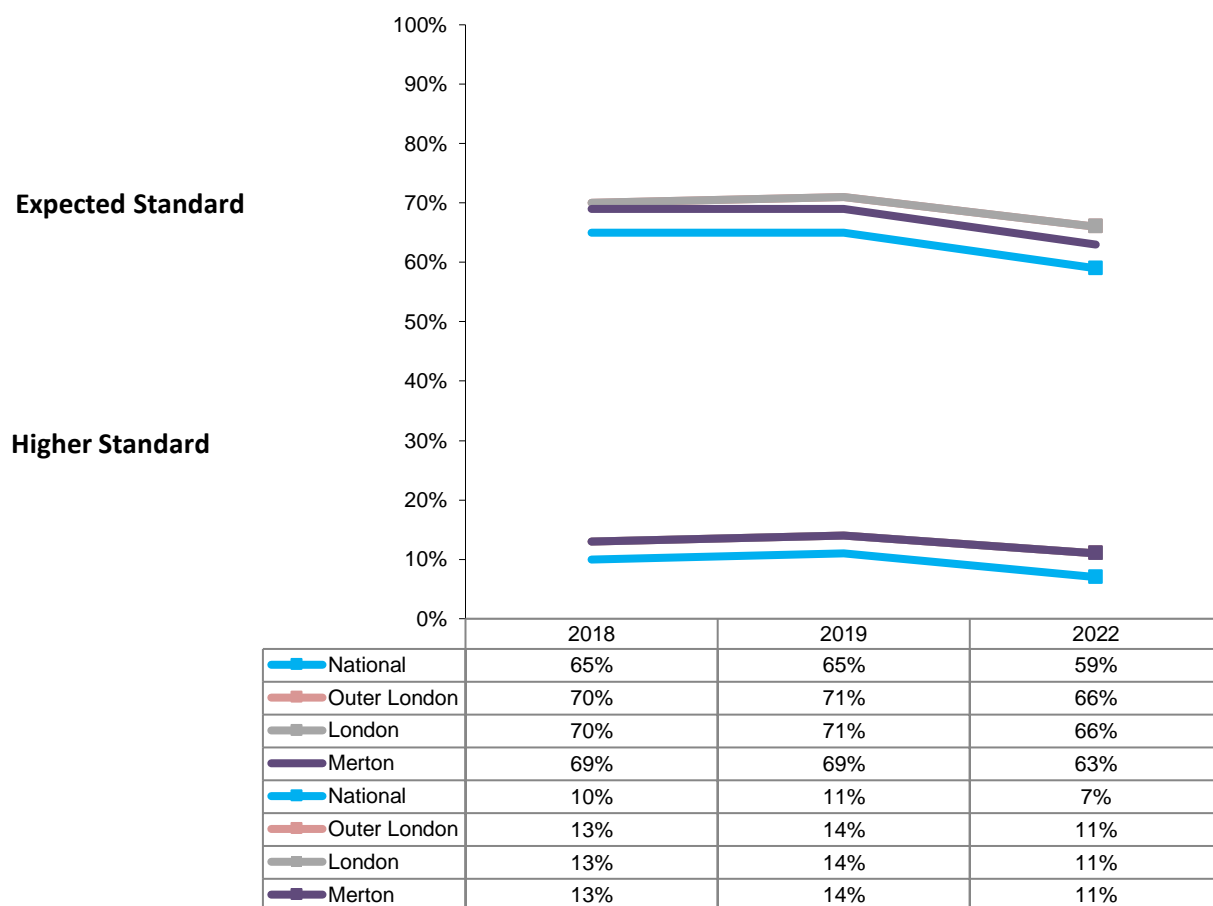




Key Stage 2 Attainment (2018 -2022): Maths



### Key Stage 2 Attainment (2018-2022): Reading, writing and mathematics



- 3.4.4 Schools, well supported by Merton School Improvement Service resources, sustained pupils’ reading skills throughout 2020 - 2021 and published performance in the reading statutory tests remains, at both the Expected and Higher standards, very similar to pre-pandemic outcomes. Merton outcomes are aligned with London and 5 percentage points above national averages.
- 3.4.5 In mathematics, while there was a drop in performance, this was not as great as that seen nationally or in London. Merton is ranked 13<sup>th</sup> of all Local Authorities for achievement at the Expected Standard, and 7<sup>th</sup> for achievement at the Higher Standard.
- 3.4.6 At Key Stage 2, writing is 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. Although the performance at the Greater Depth Standard (at 18%) is above national and local averages, the performance of pupils at the Expected standard in writing is in line with the national average but below London and the gap has widened compared with 2019. It remains a priority for 2023 to improve pupil outcomes in writing to at least London averages.
- 3.4.7 Performance in the combined attainment measure, identifying those pupils that achieved at least the expected standards in all of reading, writing and mathematics, remains above the national average but, as in 2019, is slightly below London averages, impacted by writing outcomes in particular.

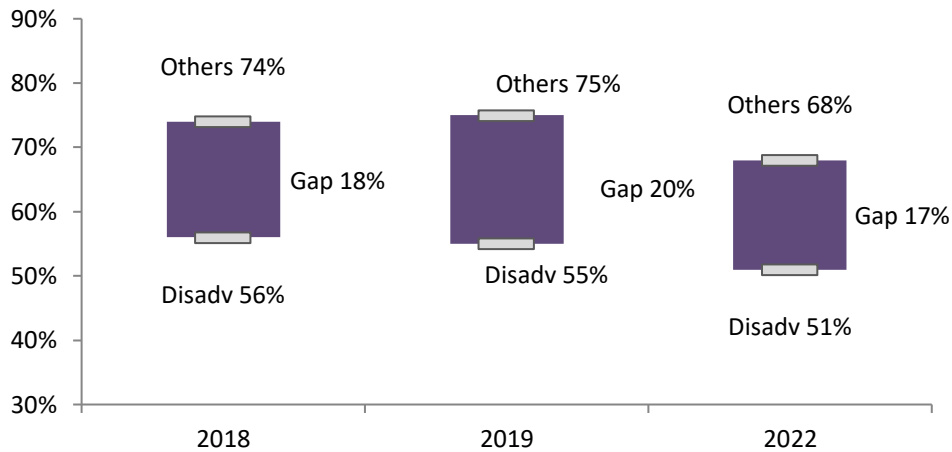
3.4.8 Quartile rankings in comparison with statistical and Outer London neighbours place Merton in the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> quartile for the majority of indicators, with the exception of: attainment in the high score in reading and in maths (which is in the first quartile in comparison with statistical neighbours); and of attainment at the expected standard and of the progress score in writing (in the fourth quartile in comparison with other Outer London boroughs). Writing in particular will remain a focus for improvement at this key stage.

# KS2 - main pupil groups and analysis

Performance in the key indicators.

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	2,231	63%	66%	59%	0.7	0.7	0.0	0.3	0.9	0.0	1.5	1.2	0.0
<b>Gender</b>													
Girls	1,080	68%	70%	63%	1.4	1.5	0.9	1.3	1.6	0.9	0.7	0.5	-0.8
Boys	1,151	58%	62%	55%	0.0	0.0	-0.7	-0.6	0.2	-0.8	2.2	1.8	0.8
Gap		10%	8%	8%	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.8	1.5	1.7	1.4	1.4	1.6
<b>Disadvantaged</b>													
Disadvantaged	686	51%	53%	43%	-0.3	0.0	-0.8	-0.4	0.3	-0.8	0.1	-0.1	-1.1
Not known to be disadvantaged	1,545	68%	72%	66%	1.1	1.1	0.4	0.6	1.2	0.4	2.1	1.8	0.5
Gap		17%	19%	23%	1.5	1.1	1.2	1.1	0.9	1.1	2.0	1.9	1.7
<b>Prior Attainment (Key Stage 1)</b>													
Low	403	13%			-0.1			-0.2			0.8		
Middle	972	64%			1.1			0.2			1.9		
High	718	92%			0.5			0.7			1.4		
<b>Special Educational Needs (SEN)</b>													
No Sen	1,740	75%	76%	69%	1.4	1.2	0.5	1.1	1.4	0.6	2.2	1.6	0.4
SEN Support	359	25%	31%	21%	-0.5	-0.2	-1.2	-1.7	-0.4	-1.6	0.1	0.1	-0.9
EHC Plan	127	10%	9%	7%	-5.0	-3.7	-4.5	-4.0	-2.8	-4.1	-3.7	-2.9	-3.9
<b>Ethnic Group</b>													
White British	677	61%	65%	57%	0.5	0.5	-0.3	-0.4	0.3	-0.3	0.5	0.2	-0.5
White Other	423	69%	66%	61%	1.3	1.1	0.9	1.2	1.5	1.3	2.7	2.3	2.0
Black African	191	62%	65%	63%	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.9	0.9	0.4	0.5	0.6
Black Caribbean	58	52%	51%	49%	0.0	-0.3	-0.3	-0.7	-0.2	-0.4	-1.3	-1.6	-1.7
White & Black Caribbean	60	33%	53%	49%	-1.7	-0.1	-0.3	-2.0	-0.2	-0.6	-2.9	-1.3	-1.6
Other mixed background	116	59%	67%	64%	1.1	0.9	0.6	-0.9	1.0	0.6	0.7	0.9	0.5
Indian	64	80%	76%	75%	0.4	1.1	1.2	2.2	1.5	1.3	4.2	3.3	3.0
Bangladeshi	25	56%	72%	68%	1.0	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.9	1.4	2.4	2.1	1.9
Pakistani	115	66%	69%	59%	1.6	0.9	0.6	0.0	1.1	0.6	2.8	1.9	1.1
Other Asian background	248	66%	73%	68%	0.4	0.9	0.9	0.6	1.2	1.3	3.4	3.1	2.8

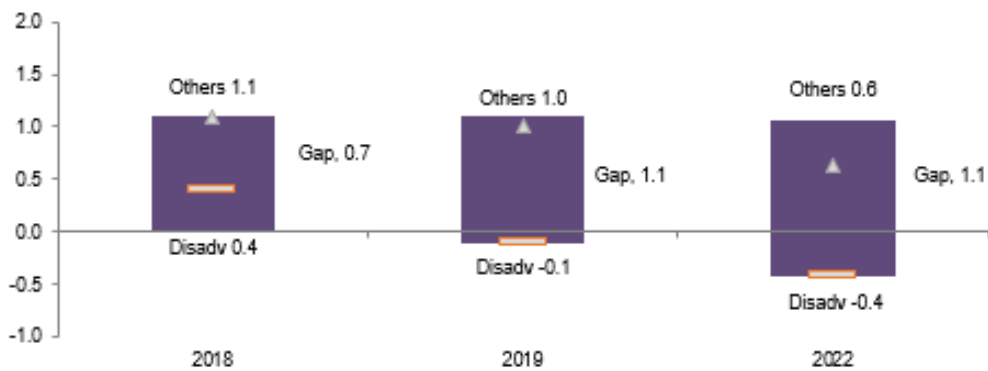
**Closing the gap: Disadvantaged**  
**Expected Standard in Reading, Writing and Maths 2018-22**



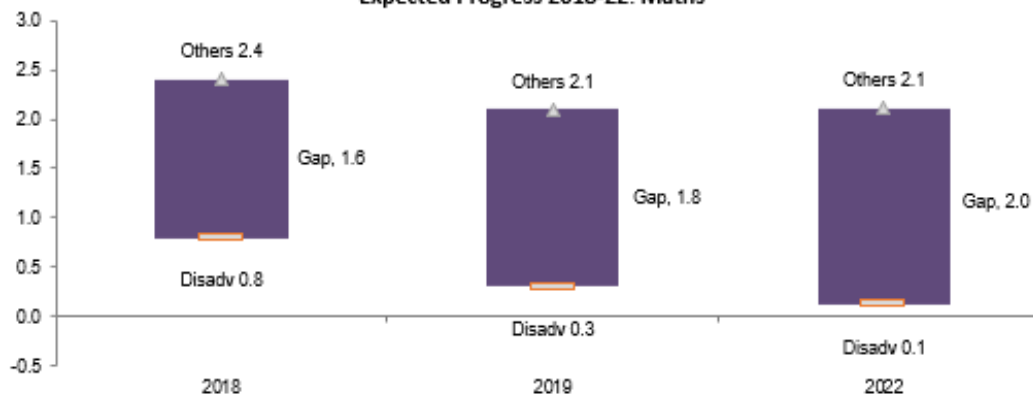
**Closing the gap: Disadvantaged  
Expected Progress 2018-22: Reading**



**Closing the gap: Disadvantaged  
Expected Progress 2018-22: Writing**



**Closing the gap: Disadvantaged  
Expected Progress 2018-22: Maths**



- 3.4.9 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.
- 3.4.10 The gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers has widened in the progress indicators, but narrowed in the combined attainment indicator. The wider gaps seem to be mirrored locally and nationally, and may be indicative of the impact of the pandemic.
- 3.4.11 In reading and maths, pupils in receipt of SEN support pupils make better progress than the same group nationally. However, attainment and progress is not as good as for the same group locally.
- 3.4.12 The performance of the largest and priority ethnic groups at this key stage varies considerably and needs to remain a focus, including through the schools' Black Lives Matter and Equalities Forum.

# 2021/22 Primary phase priorities, impact and key actions taken

3.4.13

<p><b>Priority:</b> To support schools to improve outcomes in mathematics and English at the end of KS1 and KS2 so they are at least in-line with pre-pandemic (2019) national standards.</p> <p><b>Actions taken to secure impact:</b></p> <p><b>Maths:</b> Online CPD for maths subject leaders to support them in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• using the DfE/NCTM Ready to Progress guidance, to effectively adjust long term planning and therefore address areas of the maths curriculum not secured during online teaching provision during periods of lockdown</li><li>• using formative assessment to identify areas where teaching needs to return to earlier content before moving forward to avoid gaps in knowledge widening.</li></ul> <p>Training for Y2 and Y6 teachers to ensure that they know the standards</p> <p><b>English:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Online CPD for subject leaders to address gaps in Y6 writing</li><li>• Training to support writing in lower KS2 and supporting greater depth writing through KS2</li><li>• Exploring cohesion and the progression of skills through KS1 and KS2</li><li>• Early reading with EYFS and lower KS1 teachers</li><li>• Subject leader support: spelling and oracy 'take-away' staff meeting packs for subject leaders building on support already in place for writing, early reading, reading and spelling</li><li>• Networks established for schools using the same Systematic Synthetic Phonics programmes to share good practice</li><li>• KS1 Fluency project (funded through Attain). Outcomes are very strong across the 11 schools: on average pupils made 24 months progress in reading comprehension, and 13.4 months in reading fluency (over a period of less than two terms); Black pupils made on average over 2 years 7 months progress in reading comprehension; White British learners in receipt of the PPG on average made 3+ years progress in reading comprehension.</li><li>• KS2 fluency project (funded through Attain): similarly strong gains, with the majority of pupils now with a standardised score of 97 or above (100 indicates that pupils are working at age related expectations). If the focus on fluency continues for these pupils, they will reach the expected standard in early Y7.</li></ul> <p><b>Impact:</b> Attainment dropped at the expected and higher standards particularly in writing, but these actions helped to mitigate the drops, particularly in reading and maths. Progress scores in maths remained similar to 2019 and were high.</p>
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3.4.14

<p><b>Priority:</b> To support schools to implement strategies that help pupils on SEN Support make continued progress from their starting points.</p> <p><b>Actions taken to secure impact:</b> Support for subject leaders in supporting their own teachers to track pupils where gaps in knowledge had widened. Please also see activity noted within the School Improvement priorities with regard to SEND.</p> <p><b>Impact:</b></p>
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While attainment fell for pupils with SEND it did not drop as significantly as nationally and progress was above that made by the same groups nationally.

3.4.15

**Priority:** To further support schools to embed and refine the mastery approach to teaching mathematics and to the teaching of early reading.

Actions taken to secure impact:

- Support for schools to reinforce the mastery approach through one-to-one teacher support, bespoke professional development for school staff teams, and leadership planning to implement mastery school wide.
- Support for subject leaders focussed upon effective diagnostic assessment, aspects of subject knowledge, lesson design for coherence and addressing the needs of those working below their year group curriculum.

**Impact:**

Schools are now refining their provision for pupils using the mastery approach. This is becoming more consistent in many schools and schools are 'owning' their own professional development.

## Primary Phase Priorities for 2022/23

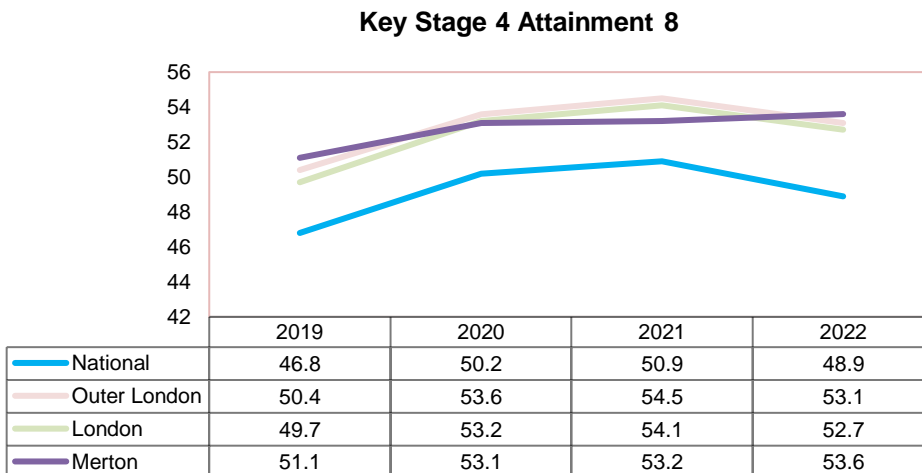
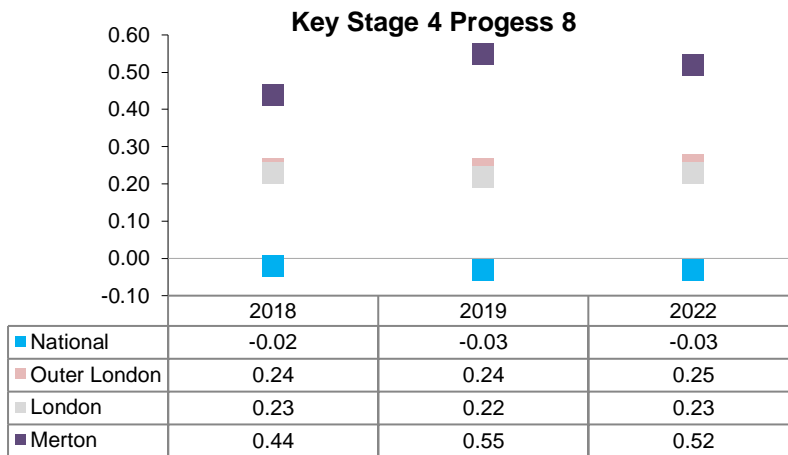
- a) Further embed and improve primary writing outcomes at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, especially for boys.
- b) Further improve outcomes in the phonics screening check for boys, disadvantaged and Black pupils
- c) Support schools in addressing the oracy needs of pupils post-pandemic, through support for schools including training and sharing examples of good practice.
- d) Support schools to continue to embed a mastery approach to the teaching of mathematics which is inclusive of SEND pupils
- e) Improve outcomes for Black Caribbean and Black African pupils at all key stages and analyse the achievement of each of those groups separately.
- f) Further support schools to strengthen their pupil premium strategies and narrow the gaps for disadvantaged pupils.
- g) 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

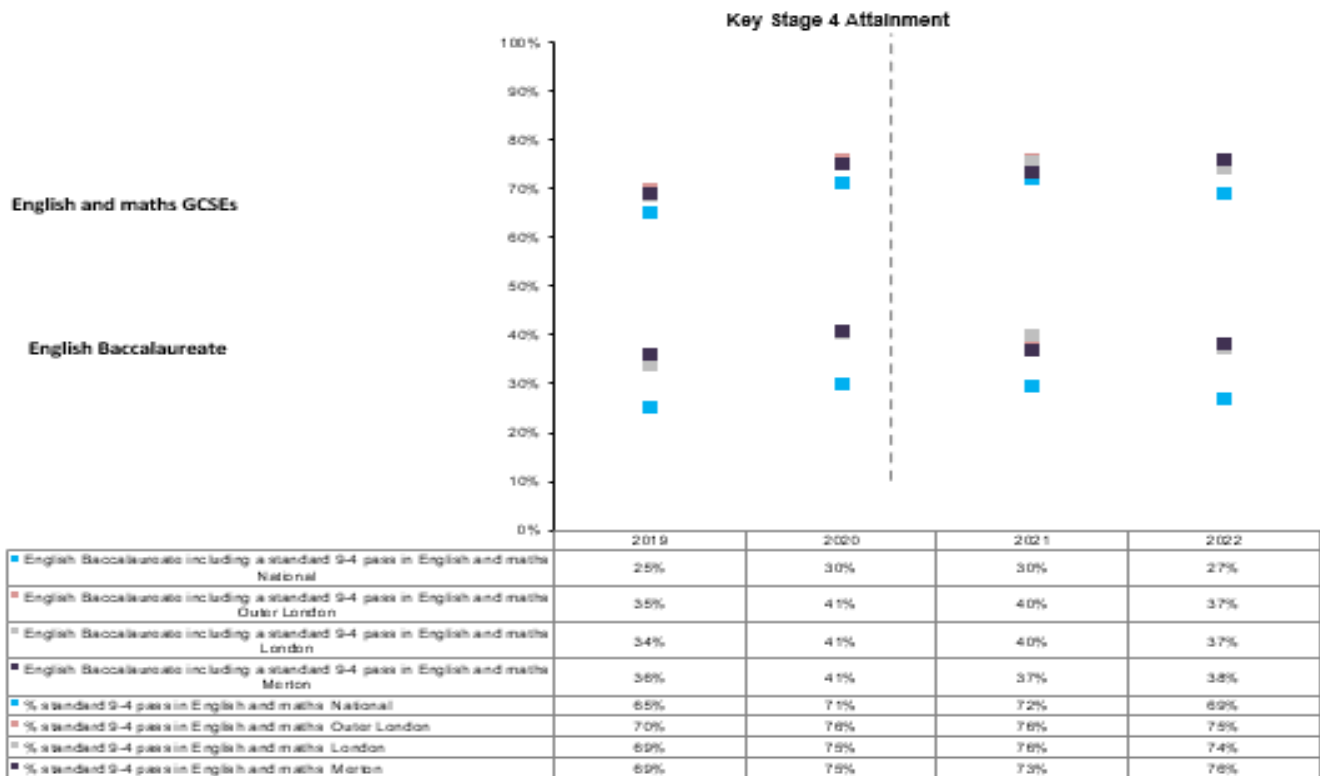


## Key Stage 4: performance information and analysis

3.5.1 Post pandemic, assessment at Key Stage 4 (KS4) in 2022 moved closer to the pre-pandemic structure, but is not yet fully aligned. Therefore comparison of outcomes should be made with caution. For the year 11 students who undertook their GCSEs this year, their entire Key Stage 4 had been disrupted every year to a greater or lesser extent by the pandemic.

### KS4 - headline performance information and analysis





3.5.2 Performance in Merton secondary schools at KS4 remains very strong.

3.5.3 At 0.52, the Progress 8 score in Merton is well above national and London averages, and ranks the Borough 2<sup>nd</sup> in the country. This strong performance has been maintained for many years

3.5.4 In the Attainment 8 indicator, Merton’s average (53.6) is above the national and the London averages. Three Merton mainstream schools are just below the national average (Harris Academy Morden, St Mark’s Academy and Raynes Park High School).

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

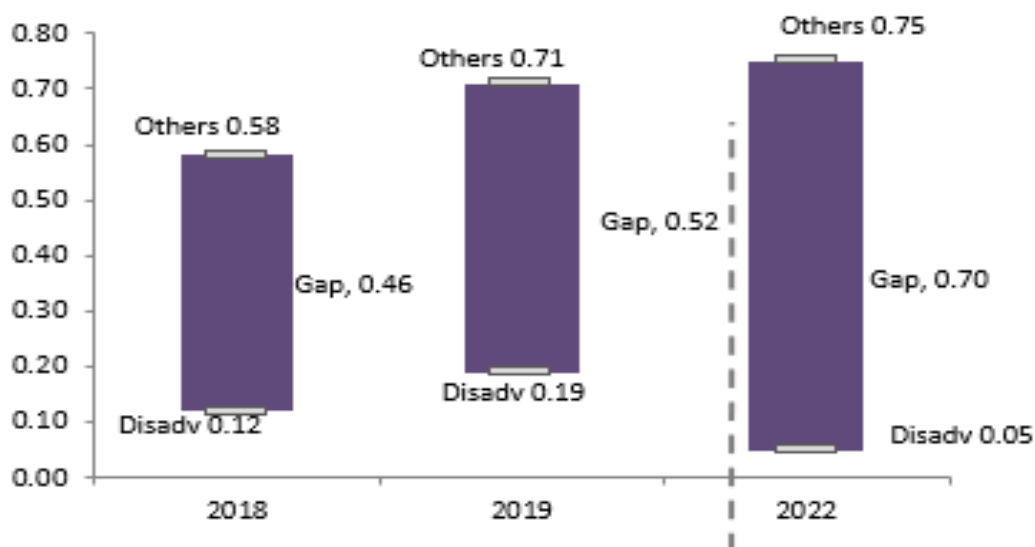
3.5.6 The proportion of students achieving a standard 9-4 pass in English and mathematics is in line with London average but above the national average.

## KS4 - main pupil groups and analysis

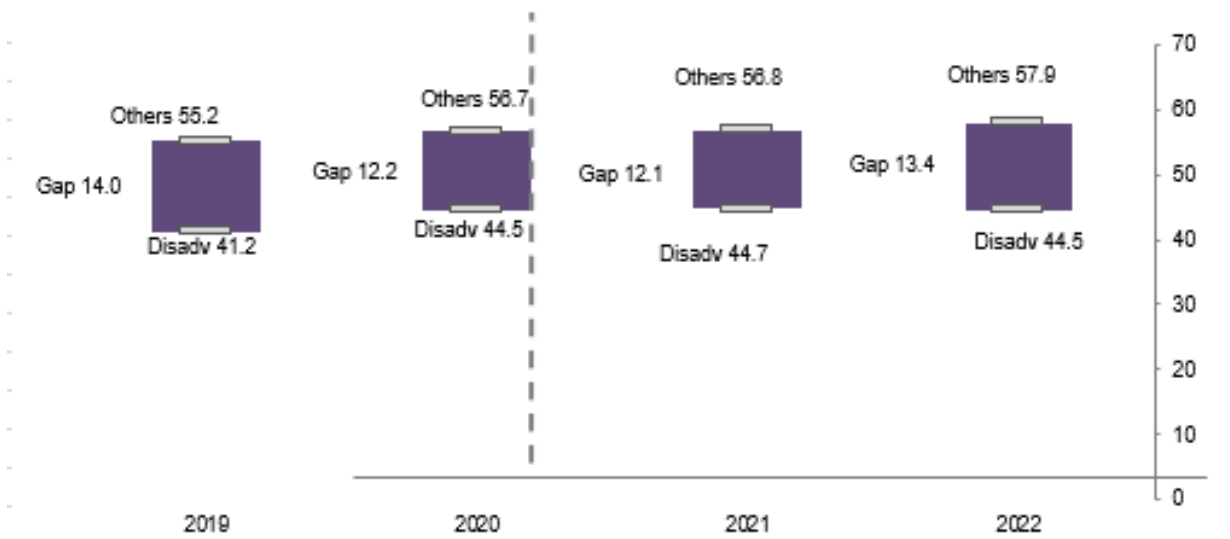
Key Stage 4 achievements by contextual groups:

Contextual Groups	Number of Pupils	Progress 8 score (2019)			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	1568	0.52	0.23	-0.03	53.6	52.7	48.9	38%	37%	27%	76%	74%	69%
<b>Gender</b>													
Female	767	0.65	0.40	0.15	55.5	55.1	51.5	40%	42%	32%	77%	77%	72%
Male	801	0.39	0.07	-0.21	51.8	50.4	46.4	36%	33%	22%	75%	72%	66%
Gap		0.26	0.33	0.36	3.7	4.7	5.1	4%	9%	10%	1%	4%	5%
<b>Disadvantaged</b>													
Disadvantaged	503	0.05	-0.15	-0.55	44.5	44.5	37.7	23%	26%	14%	59%	61%	49%
All other pupils	1065	0.75	0.42	0.15	57.9	56.6	52.9	45%	43%	31%	84%	81%	76%
Gap		0.70	0.57	0.70	13.4	12.1	15.2	23%	17%	17%	25%	19%	28%
<b>Special Educational Needs (SEN)</b>													
No Special Educational Needs	1234	0.70	0.37	0.10	58.5	56.6	52.6	45%	43%	31%	84%	81%	76%
SEN Support	253	0.14	-0.28	-0.47	42.3	39.1	34.9	15%	14%	9%	55%	48%	39%
SEN (with Statement or EHC plan)	81	-1.50	-1.07	-1.33	14.9	16.8	14.3	1%	4%	2%	15%	17%	14%
<b>Ethnic Group</b>													
ASIAN	284	0.88	0.67	0.54	56.7	58.4	55.0	42%	44%	36%	83%	82%	78%
BLACK	289	0.34	0.09	0.18	49.6	48.8	48.9	27%	32%	29%	65%	70%	69%
CHINESE	8	1.44	0.83	0.99	71.4	67.9	66.8	75%	60%	54%	100%	91%	90%
MIXED	194	0.33	0.01	-0.04	50.8	51.4	49.5	36%	36%	29%	71%	72%	69%
WHITE	708	0.48	0.08	-0.14	54.7	51.9	47.9	43%	37%	25%	79%	73%	68%

Closing the gap: Disadvantaged Progress 8



### Closing the gap: Disadvantaged Attainment 8



- 3.5.7 With regard to Progress 8 scores, all groups in Merton outperformed 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.
- 3.5.8 The gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers has widened in the Progress 8 indicator (from 0.52 to 0.70). There are also gaps in the attainment indicators which suggest that the gaps are wider in Merton than they are elsewhere in London, but narrower than those seen nationally.
- 3.5.9 Girls outperform boys in all indicators although the gaps are narrower than those seen nationally and in London.
- 3.5.10 The performance of black students, and those deemed of mixed heritage, although better than or in line with groups nationally and in London for the majority of indicators, is notably not as strong as other students in Merton. 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 is 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	603	38.25	38.35	37.86	B-	B	B-
Academic students	603	38.27	38.36	37.92	B-	B	B-
Tech level students	64	32.41	29.88	30.54	Dist-	Merit+	Dist-
Applied General students	280	35.17	30.74	31.91	Dist	Dist-	Dist-

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	38.97	18.2	30.6	20.8
London	38.52	21.7	32.5	22.6
National	38.25	20.3	31.4	20.7

3.6.2 Average Point Score (APS) per entry is above the national averages for all qualification types. Whilst being above London averages for Tech Level and Applied General qualifications, outcomes for A level and Academic qualifications is just below. Merton’s ranking in comparison with other LAs for Applied General qualifications has improved significantly (from 58<sup>th</sup> to 32<sup>nd</sup>), and the average grade is Distinction.

3.6.3 The proportions of students achieving the higher grades at A level significantly improved this year, as happened at the national and London levels. However, these outcomes should be viewed with

significant caution as the assessment and marking of these exams was not yet back to pre-pandemic levels.

3.6.4 At individual school level, A level performance is in line with or above the national average.

### Post 16 main pupil groups

Contextual Groups	Number of A level students	Average Point Score per A level entry		
		Merton	London	National
All Pupils	603	38.25	38.35	37.86
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	286	37.73	38.74	39.52
Male	317	38.70	37.86	38.10
Gap		-0.97	0.88	1.42
<b>Disadvantaged</b>				
Disadvantaged	121	36.00	34.67	33.46
Non-Disadvantaged	475	38.85	39.50	38.55
Gap		-2.85	-4.83	-5.09
<b>SEN Provision</b>				
No Special Educational Needs	552	38.51	38.46	37.96
SEN Support	29	35.15	35.91	35.76
SEN (with Statement or EHC plan)	5	32.50	36.19	35.78
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
Asian or Asian British	136	37.38	38.37	37.22
Black or Black British	95	34.86	34.40	34.06
Chinese	4	51.67	44.16	43.66
Mixed background	67	38.18	38.61	38.09
White	257	40.23	40.31	38.31

Closing the gap: Average Point Score per A level entry



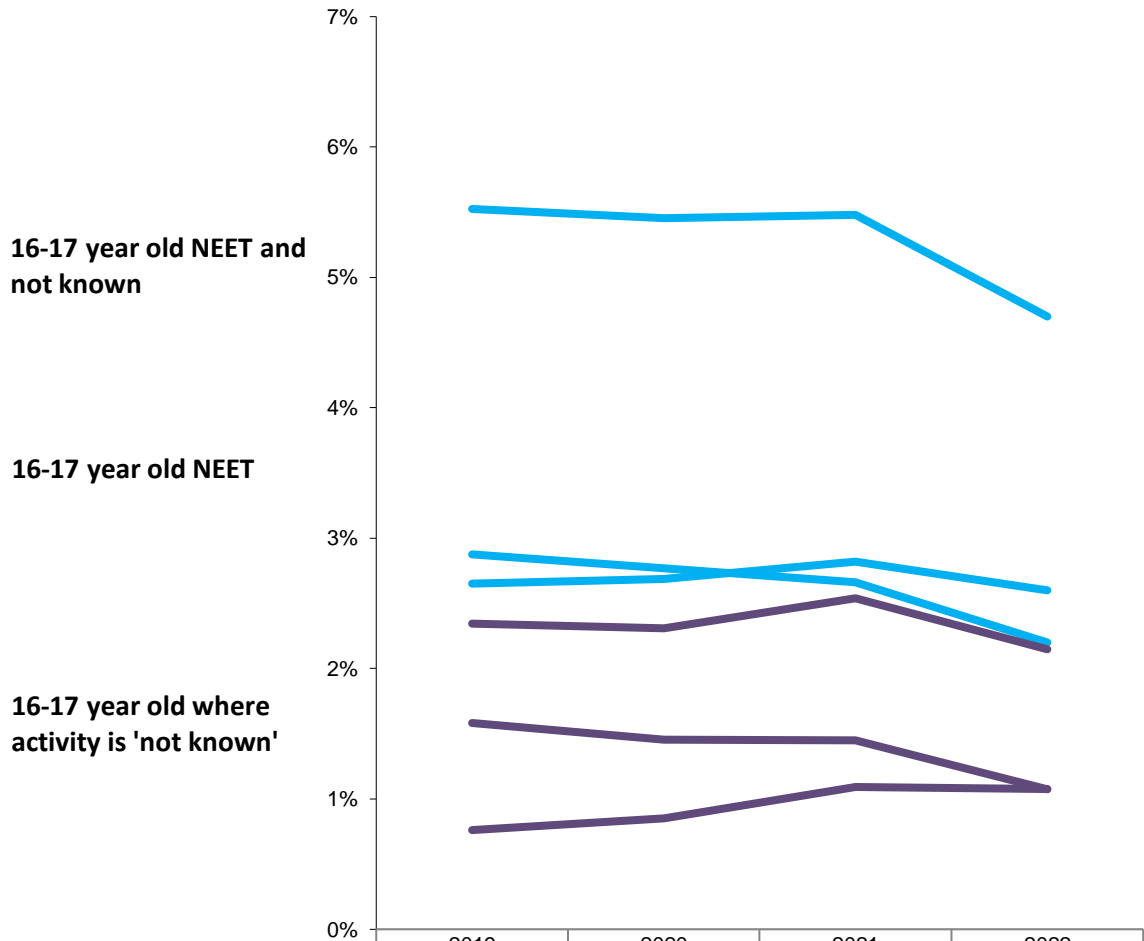
3.6.5 Girls continue to outperform boys, and the Merton gap for average point score per A level entry remains wider to that seen in London, but narrower than nationally.

- 3.6.6 The gap between disadvantaged students and their peers has narrowed this year and is remains (as it was in 2019) narrower than the gap seen nationally.
- 3.6.7 Students in receipt of SEND support perform in line with their peers nationally and in London, but those with EHCPs do not perform as well.
- 3.6.8 The five largest ethnic groups outperform the same groups 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).

**16-17 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET)**



	2019	2020	2021	2022
16-17 year old NEET Merton	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%	1.1%
16-17 year old NEET National	2.6%	2.7%	2.8%	2.6%
16-17 year old where activity is 'not known' Merton	0.8%	0.9%	1.1%	1.1%
16-17 year old where activity is 'not known' National	2.9%	2.8%	2.7%	2.2%
16-17 year old NEET or not known Merton	2.3%	2.3%	2.5%	2.1%
16-17 year old NEET or not known National	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%	4.7%

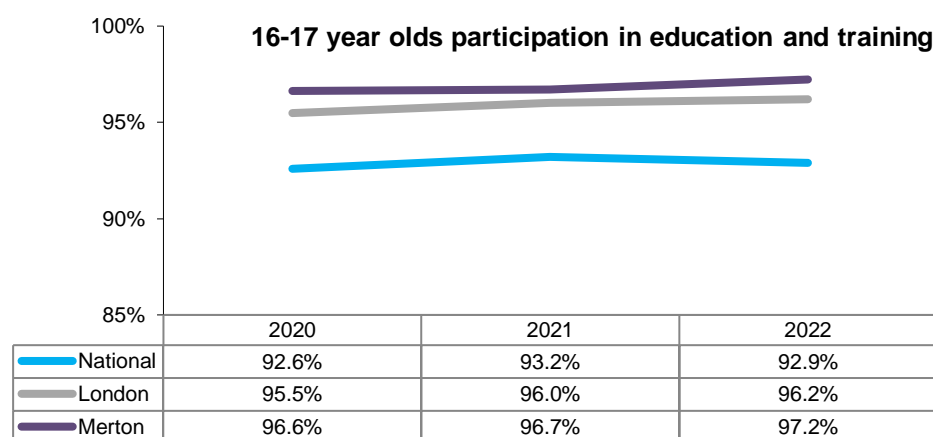
3.7.2 The proportions of young people who are Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET) and whose status is not known, have again fallen and are significantly better than national and London averages. Performance in all three indicators continues to place Merton in the top quintile of performance nationally. Merton has now moved to 5<sup>th</sup> best performance in England. This has been achieved as a result of significant and robust tracking and partnership working across schools, colleges and CSF teams. These low levels have been maintained for over 3 years. We know that a higher number of young people are struggling to maintain college placements due to their mental health, we aim to



keep NEET low, but we accept that this will require ongoing support for young people to hold their places in college.

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	2020			2021			2022		
	Merton	London	National	Merton	London	National	Merton	London	National
16-17 year olds participating in - education and training	96.6%	95.5%	92.6%	96.7%	96.0%	93.2%	97.2%	96.2%	92.9%
- full time education	92.9%	91.9%	85.4%	93.8%	93.4%	87.4%	94.4%	93.5%	86.6%
- apprenticeships	2.4%	2.2%	5.1%	1.3%	1.4%	3.8%	1.7%	1.7%	4.4%
- other education and training	1.3%	1.4%	2.2%	1.6%	1.2%	2.0%	1.1%	1.0%	1.9%

3.7.4 This year the proportion of 16 – 17 year olds participating in education and training has increased by 0.5 percentage points, and continues a four-year upward trend (against a fluctuating picture nationally). 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 0.6% percentage points since last year. This continues a rising three-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 has risen slightly and is in line with London averages.

## Apprenticeship Participation

Figure under date refers to number of 16 and 17 year olds academic age	Apprenticeship Participation								
	2022	Rank	2021	Rank	2020	Rank	2019	Rank	% change in year 2021 to 2022
National	4.4%		3.8%		5.1%		5.5%		0.6%
<b>Merton</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0.4%</b>
Barnet	1.3%	8	0.9%	8	1.4%	11	1.2%	11	0.4%
Ealing	1.2%	9	0.8%	9	1.2%	10	1.3%	10	0.5%
Enfield	1.5%	7	1.5%	5	2.3%	8	1.6%	8	0.0%
Hillingdon	2.8%	3	2.4%	3	2.6%	3	3.9%	3	0.4%
Hounslow	1.5%	6	0.7%	11	1.8%	9	1.3%	9	0.8%
Kingston upon Thames	1.7%	4	1.7%	4	2.6%	4	2.6%	4	0.0%
Reading	3.5%	1	2.5%	2	3.8%	2	4.0%	2	1.1%
Redbridge	1.0%	11	0.9%	7	1.6%	5	2.3%	5	0.1%
Sutton	3.2%	2	2.6%	1	4.2%	1	4.1%	1	0.6%
Wandsworth	1.0%	10	0.7%	10	1.3%	7	1.8%	7	0.3%

3.7.7 When comparing the apprenticeship participation rates in Merton to those in the previous year, Merton has seen a rise in 16-17 year olds participating in apprenticeships in line with the majority of statistical neighbour local authorities.

3.7.8 2019 performance ranks Merton 5th in comparison with 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.

## 2021/22 Secondary phase priorities, impact and key actions taken

### 3.8.1

**Priority:**

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.

**Actions taken to secure impact:**

Targeted work with SEND, Care Experienced Young People and those on Youth Justice Orders has continued. Staff with remit for key vulnerable groups are brought together in an Education, Training and Employment (ETE) Network of staff to share information and skills to support. There is regular tracking of data relating to targeted NEET groups at strategic boards, including Corporate Parenting, SEND board and Youth Justice Board. A base line project will look to track Post 16 SEND NEET.

**Impact:**

Rates of ETE among young people open to the Youth Justice Service are well above national and London comparators. ETE rates for care experienced young people are rising and performing above National comparators. Project looking at NEET rates for young people with SEND is improving data quality and has supported more EHCP plans to be appropriately ceased.

### 3.8.2

**Priority:**

Post pandemic and with the reintroduction of public examinations at KS4 and post 16, to support schools to maximise outcomes for pupils, and particularly for those in vulnerable groups.

**Actions taken to secure impact:**

Termly meetings for secondary deputy heads and Heads of Department support members to analyse data, share impactful strategies and good practice, and consider research-led initiatives. Merton Education Partner (MEP) Inspectors engage in professional dialogue with senior school leaders and support department-focussed Deep Dives and school reviews.

**Impact:** School leaders, in Merton's good and outstanding schools, sustain their reputation for strong teaching and learning and accurate knowledge of examination syllabi and provide all groups of pupils with challenge and high expectations.

### 3.8.3

**Priority:** To support schools to implement strategies that help pupils on SEN Support make continued progress from their starting points.

**Actions taken to secure impact:**

Merton has a strong secondary SENCO forum and SEN Working Group. These continue to make an important contribution, for example, in sharing strategies and research-led practice.

**Impact:** The above is evidence of strong practice and leadership in Merton.

## Secondary Phase Priorities for 2022/23

- a) Ensure all Merton secondary schools remain good or outstanding.
- b) 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
- c) 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.
- d) Narrow the gaps for key groups at KS4: disadvantaged pupils, pupils in receipt of SEN support and Black pupils and those of mixed heritage.
- e) Focus on SEND NEET post 16 and set up a SEND employability forum.

# 4. Achievement of Pupils in the Virtual School

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## Context

- 4.2.1 In February 2022, the Merton's Children's Services were inspected by Ofsted. This inspection included scrutiny of the work of the Virtual School. The Local Authority was judged to be Outstanding in this inspection, and inspectors commented very favourably on the work of the Virtual School.
- 4.2.2 "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. 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."
- 4.2.3 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.
- 4.2.4 The Department for Education (DfE) collects information on the educational outcomes of looked after children in Annexe 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. In March 2022 there were 76 children of statutory school age on the roll of the Virtual School. There were also 64 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 a decrease of two school age children and 10 young people over the age of 16 in comparison with the previous year.
- 4.2.5 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 9 and above. There were also 25 UASC in Years 12 and 13.

UASC Statutory School Aged Summer 2022			UASC Post 16 Summer 2022		
Year Groups	Total number	%	Year Groups	Total number	% Yr 12 & 13
Year 9	1	1.28%	Year 12	8	11.94%
Year 10	3	3.85%	Year 13	3	4.47%
Year 11	6	7.69%	Year 13 (CL)	14	20.89%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12.82%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>37.30%</b>

4.2.6 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.

4.2.7 Results for 2022 Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 for this cohort are due to be published at the DfE at the end of March 2023, but the Virtual School collects data from schools in advance of this. It is this data which is included in the information below.

4.2.8 Results for 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.

4.2.9 There was no data for primary aged children in 2020 or 2021, due to the pandemic.

#### 4.2.10 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

School age children with SEN	Total EHCPs	% of Total School Age (78) EHCP	SEN Support	% Total SEN	Total SEN (EHCP + SEN Support)	% Total SEN
Primary	6	7.69%	7	8.97%	13	16.67%
Secondary	22	28.21%	14	17.95%	36	46.15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>35.90%</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>26.92%</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>62.82%</b>

4.2.11 The proportion of pupils on roll with the Virtual School with a Special Educational Need or Disability is high, and at 62.82% is above the latest published national average of 56.3%. However, this represents a small drop in comparison with the previous year, when the rate was 74%.

## Outcomes

### 4.3.1 EYFSP outcomes

EYFSP Good Level of Development (GLD)	2018		2019		2022	
	Percentage GLD	No. of Children	Percentage GLD	No. of Children	Percentage GLD	No. of Children
Merton Looked After Children	0%	5	0%	5	N/A	N/A
Merton 903 Children	0%	<5	0%	<5	N/A	N/A
Merton All Children	73.5%		75.2%			
National All Children	71.5%		71.8%			

- There were no Merton children in care at this assessment point in 2022.

#### 4.3.2 Year 1 Phonics Screening Check outcomes

Phonics Screening Check (Year 1)	2018		2019		2022	
	% achieving standard	No. of Children	% achieving standard	No. of Children	% achieving standard	No. of Children
Merton Looked After Children	33.3%	Fewer than five	40%	5	100%	<5
Merton 903 Children	NA	0	50%	<5	100%	<5
Merton All Children	85%		83%		79.1%	
National All Children	82%		82%		75%	

- There were no children in Year 2 who did not achieve the expected standard when they were in Year 1 therefore no children were screened again during 2021/2022.

#### 4.3.3 End of KS1 Assessment - READING

Key Stage 1 READING	2018			2019			2022		
	EXS+	GDS	No.	EXS+	GDS	No.	EXS+	GDS	No.
Merton Looked After Children	50%	50%	<5	60%	0%	5	50%	0%	<5
Merton 903 Children	0%	0%	<5	33%	0%	<5	50%	0%	<5
Merton All Children	78%	29%		79%	29%		71.2%	23%	
National looked after Children	51%			NYA			45%		
National All Children	75%	26%		75%	25%		67%	18%	

#### 4.3.4 End of KS1 Assessment - WRITING

Key Stage 1 WRITING	2018			2019			2022		
	EXS+	GDS	No.	EXS+	GDS	No.	EXS+	GDS	No.
Merton Looked After Children	50%	0%	<5	40%	0%	5	50%	0%	<5
Merton 903 Children	0%	0%	<5	33%	0%	<5	50%	0%	<5
Merton All Children	71%	18%		70%	17%		59.6%	12%	
National Looked After Children	42%			NYA			34%		
National All Children	70%	16%		69%	15%		58%	8%	

#### 4.3.5 End of KS1 Assessment - MATHEMATICS

Key Stage 1 MATHEMATICS	2018			2019			2022		
	EXS+	GDS	No.	EXS+	GDS	No.	EXS+	GDS	No.
Merton Looked After Children	50%	0%	<5	60%	0%	5	50%	0%	<5
Merton 903 Children	0%	0%	<5	33%	0%	<5	50%	0%	<5
Merton All Children	78%	26%		79%	27%		72%	22%	
National Looked After Children	49%			NYA			43%		
National All Children	76%	22%		76%	22%		68%	15%	

#### End of KS2 Outcomes

4.3.6 There were six children in care at the end of Key Stage 2. Two of the six children had an EHCP. Four of the six (67.7%) children achieved the expected standard in all of reading, writing and maths. This compares with 32% of children looked after nationally, and with 61.1% of all pupils in Merton schools

#### 4.3.7 KS2 READING

Key Stage 2 READING	2018				2019				2022			
	EXS+	GDS	Progress	No	EXS+	GDS	Progress	No	EXS+	GDS	Progress	No
Merton Looked After Children	58%	25%	2.24	12	30%	0%	-2.27	10	66.7%	16.7%	4.72	6
Merton 903 Children	42%	13%	0.59	8	50%	0%	-1.67	7	66.7%	16.7%	4.72	6
Merton All Children	79%	33%	1.6		78%	31%	1.47		90%	33%	0.7	
National Looked After Children	51%		-0.2		NYA		NYA		52%			
National All Children	75%	28%	0		73%	27%	0		75%	28%		

#### 4.3.8 KS2 WRITING

Key Stage 2 WRITING	2018				2019				2022			
	EXS+	GDS	Progress	No	EXS+	GDS	Progress	No	EXS+	GDS	Progress	No
Merton Looked After Children	58%	8%	-1.95	12	40%	0%	-1.4	10	66.7%	16.7%	+6	6
Merton 903 Children	75%	0%	-2.66	8	67%	0%	-0.47	7	66.7%	16.7%	+6	6
Merton All Children	77%	22%	0.6		79%	22%	-0.68		70%	18%	0.3	
National Looked After Children	49%		-0.8		NYA		NYA		43%			
National All Children	78%	20%	0		79%	20%	0		70%	13%		

#### 4.3.9 KS2 MATHEMATICS

Key Stage 2 MATHEMATICS	2018				2019				2022			
	EXS+	GDS	Progress	No.	EXS+	GDS	Progress	No.	EXS+	GDS	Progress	No.
Merton Looked After Children	42%	8%		12	40%	0%	-0.2	10	66.7%	0%	3.23	6
Merton 903 Children	38%	13	-2.08	8	50%	0%	-0.08	7	66.7%	0%	3.23	6
Merton All Children	82%	31	2.0		82%	34%	1.56		79%	33%	1.5	
National Looked After Children	47%		-0.8		NYA		NYA		45%			
National All	75%	24	0		79%	27%	0		72%	23%		

#### End of KS4 Outcomes (GCSE)

4.3.10 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 achieve qualifications in ESOL and in entry level qualifications.



		English & Maths (grades 1-9)	English & Maths Standard Pass (grades 4-9)
2020	Merton All (16)	25%	6.25%
	Merton 903 (8)	50%	12.5%
	National		24.4%
2021	Merton All (15)	66.6%	20%
	Merton 903 (12)	75%	16.7%
	National		28.8%
2022	Merton All (16)	37%	19%
	Merton 903 (8)	62.5%	37.5%
	National		NYA

4.3.11 All Year 11 pupils had a planned destination for autumn 2022.

### Post 16

4.3.12 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 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 aged 18 – 25 years who have more challenges in becoming EET, through the work of the EET Support Worker.

4.3.13 Young people at the end of Year 13 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. However, where possible we gather the information about individuals for the purpose of supporting them further.

4.3.14 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 achieved a mix of T Levels and A Level Qualifications.

### Higher Education

4.3.16 Eight young people started university in October 2022, of whom two were previously unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. In total there were 16 undergraduate students during the year. There were also two postgraduate students during the year, one of whom obtained a Masters degree.

4.3.17 The final year University results in the summer of 2022 were as follows:

- One young person secured a First-class degree in BA Hons Business Management, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship.
- One young person passed BSc Live Sound Technology.

### General Progress and Attainment

4.3.18 Academic Progress updates 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 are also included which provide insight into each pupil's engagement in learning.

4.3.19 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.

4.3.20 Of those in care for all of the academic year 2021/2022, 62.5% consistently made progress against their own targets each term. For those where progress is not being made as expected (for example as a result of placement disruption, health issues, or contextual safeguarding issues) the Virtual School works with the network to try to maximise those outcomes. Of those who did not make progress earlier in the year, 43% made progress as the academic year went on.

## Attendance

4.3.21

Cumulative Attendance	All CIC %	903 Cohort %
Primary Attendance	96.85	96.61
Secondary Attendance	88.30	89.54
Overall Attendance	91.26	92.13

Overall attendance has improved since 2020/2021, when the country continued to experience lockdowns as a result of the pandemic. The attendance of children in care compares favourably with that of all pupils in Merton, though, like all children, they have faced the same issues post pandemic of increased concerns regarding their mental health.

## Exclusions and suspensions

4.3.22

Suspensions	2020/21	2020/21	2021/22	2021/22
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
Number of pupils with first suspensions	1	6	1	7
Number of pupils with more than one suspension	1	7	0	5

The number of first suspensions remains broadly similar to that in previous years, but there has been a small drop in the number of pupils with more than one suspension where the rate (6.6%) is lower than the most recently published national average of 9.38% (from 2019/20).

4.3.23 There were no permanent exclusions of children in care to Merton during 2021/2022, as in previous years. This compares with the latest figure published nationally of 0.05% (from 2019/20)

## Supporting young people into Education, Employment or Training (EET)

4.3.24 At the end of the academic year 2021/22 85% of Post 16 (Year 12 and 13) were in Employment, education or Training with most engaging in college courses. This is an increase of five percentage points in comparison with the previous year.

#### 4.3.25 Educational Placements as at end of academic year 2021/2022

EET/NEET end of academic year	Total No. Young people	No.EET	% EET of total Post 16 (inc. CL)	College	School	Training	Apprenticeship	Employment	Tuition	No. NEET	% NEET of total Post 16 (inc. CL)
Year 12	25	23	34.33%	14	6	2	0	1	0	2	2.99%
Year 13	2	2	2.99%	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Year 13 (CL)	40	32	47.76%	19	2	5	2	3	1	8	11.94%

4.3.26 At the end of the academic year 2021/2022 there were 18 young people who were being supported by the EET Support Worker into Education, Employment or Training between the ages of 19 and 25 years. Eight young people moved from NEET to EET during the autumn term with the support of the EET Support Worker, and five more young people had moved from NEET to EET by the end of the summer term 2022.

## Actions undertaken by the Virtual School to secure outcomes

### Quality of schools attended by Merton Looked After Children end of academic year 2021/22

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.

#### 4.3.27

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 School	1	1.28%	0	1	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	1	1.28%
Academy	2	2.56%	1	1	1	1.28%	1	0	4	5.13%	4	0	7	8.97%
Outstanding	11	14.10%	0	11	10	12.82%	6	4	0	0.00%	0	0	21	26.92%
Good	17	21.79%	4	13	14	17.95%	4	10	10	12.82%	2	8	41	52.56%
Requires Improvement	0	0.00%	0	0	2	2.56%	0	2	3	3.85%	0	3	5	6.41%
Inadequate	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0.00%
<b>Total of CIC</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>39.74%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>34.62%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>21.79%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>96.15%</b>

4.3.28 Where a child is already on roll of a school that Ofsted judges to Require Improvement 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.

4.3.29 Where it is deemed to be unsettling for the children to be moved when their schools are judged to require Improvement, 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.

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

### **Personal Education Plans (PEPs)**

- 4.3.31 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.
- 4.3.32 The Virtual School Advisory Teachers lead on the PEP meetings. Meetings for an initial PEP (within 20 school days of coming into care) is 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.
- 4.3.33 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.
- 4.3.34 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.
- 4.3.35 During the academic year 2021/2022, 100% PEPs were completed on time, including both Initial PEPs and termly Review PEPs.
- 4.3.36 All school age PEPs were quality assured against robust criteria, which are rigorously applied consistently: Gold (Outstanding); Green (Good); Amber (Requires Improvement) and Red (Inadequate). In the summer term 2022, the QA process identified that 3% of PEPs were Gold, 76% Green, 19% Amber and 1% Red. This was an improvement from the launch in the autumn term 2021, where most were quality assured as Amber. During 2021/2022 the QA process for Post 16 PEPs was designed for launch in 2022/2023.

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

- 4.3.37 The Pupil Premium Plus grant funded by the DfE for looked after children in Merton was £2345 in 2021/2022. 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.
- 4.3.38 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.

- 4.3.39 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.
- 4.3.40 In 2021/2022, the PPP funding was used for a variety of interventions and programmes for individual children in care, including:
- Academic intervention programmes
  - Behavioural, emotional, mental health interventions
  - Additional 1:1 support
  - Learning Resources
  - 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
- 4.3.41 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 2022, 58% 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.
- 4.3.42 Feedback from foster carers cited that for those children who had participated in them, they enjoyed these activities. Foster carers noticed a boost in the children's confidence; that they were more settled; and that their social skills were developed, contributing to the improvement of their overall wellbeing. 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.
- 4.3.43 Most PPP is used to fund individual tuition. The Virtual School became a registered school in the National Tutoring Programme (NTP) during 2021/22, and additional funding was allocated by the DfE for NTP tuition. One to one tuition was provided in the majority of cases by Targeted Provision, which has a Service Level Agreement with Merton.
- 4.3.44 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. 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.

## **Pupil Views**

- 4.3.45 The Virtual School continued to seek to develop a relationship with all its pupils and students and encouraged them to participate in their Personal Educational Plan meetings either by attending for some or all of the meeting or sharing their views by school staff beforehand.
- 4.3.46 The views of the child are gathered as 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. 80% of young people shared their views for this purpose. In addition, on average, 45% of young people attended their PEP meetings.
- 4.3.47 All young people of primary, secondary or post 16 age receive a young person version of their PEP document.
- 4.3.48 Examples of targets which reflect the child's view are:
- Child A's worry about maths has been addressed with maths tuition.
  - Child B indicated she was less secure with her maths and a tutor will now be put in place to support her to achieve a grade 4 in this subject.
  - Child C needs are reflected in the targets as she will continue to get support for emotional wellbeing through drama therapy.
  - Child D wanted science tutoring to continue into the summer term and this has been extended accordingly.

## **Bright Spots Survey (Your Life, Your Care)**

- 4.3.49 From November 2021 to March 2022 all children in care aged 4-18yrs were asked to take part in an online survey to find out how they felt about their lives. 81 children in care responded to the survey from a total eligible of 124 (65%). When asked, "how much do you like school/college?", all the youngest children reported they liked school 'a lot', and 83% of the 11-18yrs liked school or college 'a lot' or 'a bit', which is a greater proportion than in the general population (70%).
- 4.3.50 These results were identified as a 'Bright Spot' of practice within the broader survey, indicating a 'good news' story, or a positive aspect of practice in our local authority. This is where children and young people are doing significantly better than children in care in other LAs.

## **Previously Looked-After Children**

- 4.3.51 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.
- 4.3.52 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 2021/2022 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

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

- 4.3.53 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).
- 4.3.54 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.
- 4.3.55 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.
- 4.3.56 Bespoke surveys were designed to assist in understanding of pupil and school demographics and the team successfully managed to gather a raft of information from schools, EYFS providers, colleges, and social workers.
- 4.3.57 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.
- 4.3.58 The Virtual School also commissioned additional Educational Psychology Service provision to influence more precise and targeted assessment and support for children with a social worker who may have special educational needs.
- 4.3.59 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.

### **Development & Training of the Workforce**

- 4.3.60 A full programme of training was delivered 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
  - Y6 transition
  - Online Safety
  - Understanding speech and language needs of CYP

- Positive behaviour strategies
- Supporting Primary reading
- Attachment and Developmental Trauma
- EPEP Training
- The Governor's role and responsibilities.
- Getting the most from the Adopters Hub

4.3.61 Training was well received with 85% of evaluation responses rating it as excellent and 15% as good.



# 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.)

### 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 2022) 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. Rates of attendance in Merton have dropped during this period, as they have done nationally, demonstrating the impact of the pandemic as schools have moved back to normal expectations of attendance. Anxiety on the part of both children and their parents is affecting attendance levels. Merton continues to be above the national average for attendance, but has dropped just below the London averages for this period. Merton's rate of Persistent Absence is also better than the national average, but below the London average for this period. Improving attendance will be a significant priority for Merton in 2022/23, as it is nationally, and in line with newly issued guidance from the Government. Attendance is 2% below pre – pandemic levels and Persistence Absence is running at double the pre pandemic level based on 2 term data.

All Schools (primary and secondary)	Merton	London	Outer London	National
Attendance	93.6%	93.8%	93.7%	92.7%
Absence	6.4%	6.2%	6.3%	7.3%
Persistent Absence	18.9%	18.4%	18.5%	22.0%

*Date for 2 terms, Autumn 2021 and Spring 2022*

Attendance by disadvantaged groups and those with SEN support or EHCP is better in Merton than national or London. Attendance and PA by pupils of Black Caribbean, Pakistani and black African heritage is worse than London and National.

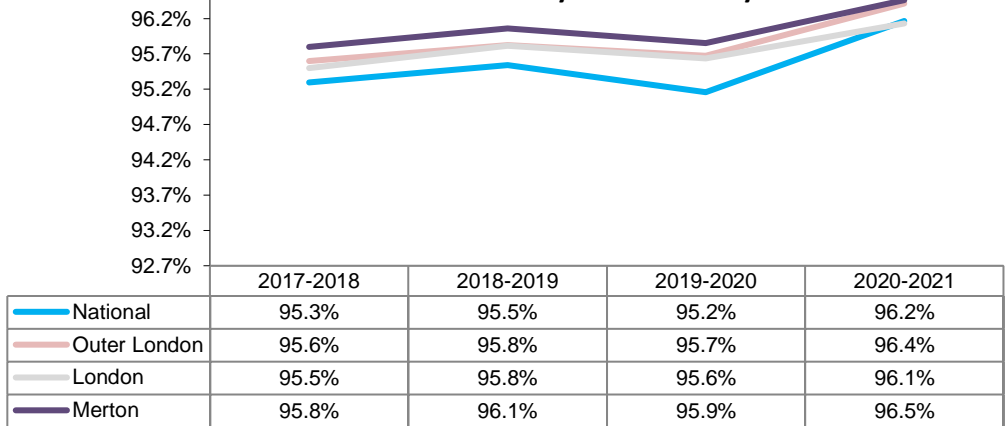
Contextual Groups	Number of Pupils	Overall Absence - All Schools				Persistence Absentees – All Schools			
		Merton 2021-22	Merton 2020-21	London 2021-22	National 2021-22	Merton 2021-22	Merton 2020-21	London 2021-22	National 2021-22
All Pupils	23057	6.4%	3.5%	6.2%	7.3%	18.9%	8.7%	18.4%	18.5%
<b>Gender</b>									
Female	11104	6.5%	3.5%	6.3%	7.4%	19.1%	8.5%	18.6%	22.4%
Male	11953	6.5%	4.3%	6.2%	7.2%	19.4%	10.8%	18.3%	21.6%
Gap		0.1%	0.7%	-0.1%	-0.2%	0.3%	2.3%	-0.4%	-0.7%
<b>Disadvantaged</b>									
Disadvantaged	5782	8.7%	6.6%	8.1%	10.3%	30.0%	18.9%	26.8%	35.0%
All other pupils	17275	5.7%	3.1%	5.6%	6.4%	15.7%	7.1%	15.6%	18.1%
Gap		3.0%	3.5%	2.4%	3.9%	14.3%	11.8%	11.2%	17.0%
<b>Special Educational Needs (SEN)</b>									
No Identified SEN or unclassified	18580	5.9%	2.9%	5.9%	6.8%	17.0%	6.6%	17.0%	20.2%
SEN Support	3279	8.3%	5.2%	8.1%	9.7%	27.5%	14.0%	26.0%	31.2%
SEN ( EHC plan)	1198	10.3%	17.3%	8.9%	11.3%	32.0%	51.1%	28.5%	34.2%
<b>Ethnic Group</b> (White British and five largest or priority ethnic minority groups)									
White British	6692	7.4%	4.3%	7.3%	7.7%	21.8%	11.2%	21.7%	23.3%
White Other	4168	6.0%	2.8%	6.2%	6.8%	17.1%	5.8%	18.1%	20.7%
Mixed Ethnicity	2847	7.3%	4.7%	6.9%	7.4%	22.8%	12.2%	21.4%	23.0%
Asian Other	2229	5.1%	3.4%	5.0%	5.3%	12.4%	7.4%	13.1%	14.6%
Black African	1863	4.5%	3.3%	4.2%	4.0%	11.6%	8.1%	10.2%	9.4%
Asian Pakistani	1234	7.2%	4.5%	6.9%	7.0%	24.9%	11.9%	22.8%	23.5%
Black Caribbean	737	7.7%	5.6%	7.1%	7.0%	26.1%	15.9%	22.9%	22.6%
White and Black Caribbean	669	9.0%	7.0%	8.8%	9.0%	30.2%	20.5%	29.4%	29.8%

*Disadvantaged is FSM Eligible*

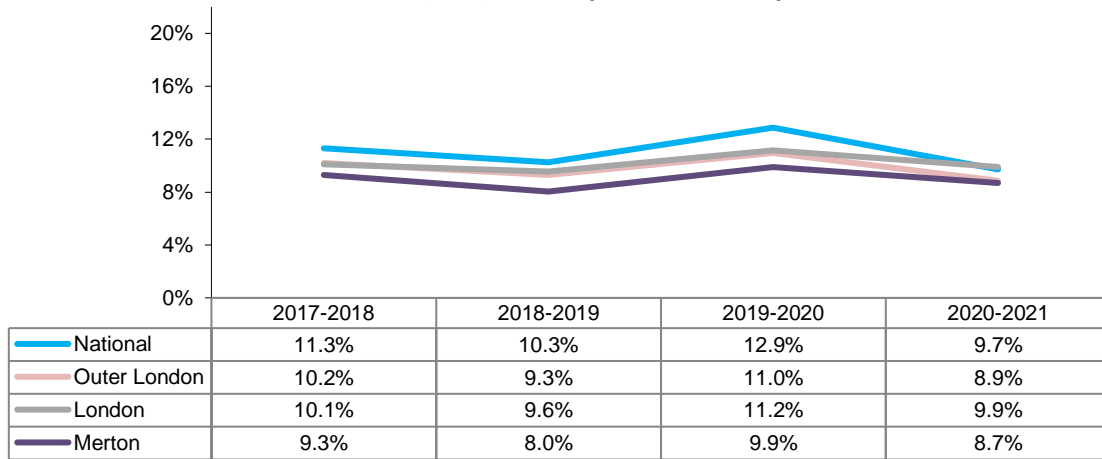
## Six half term headline data

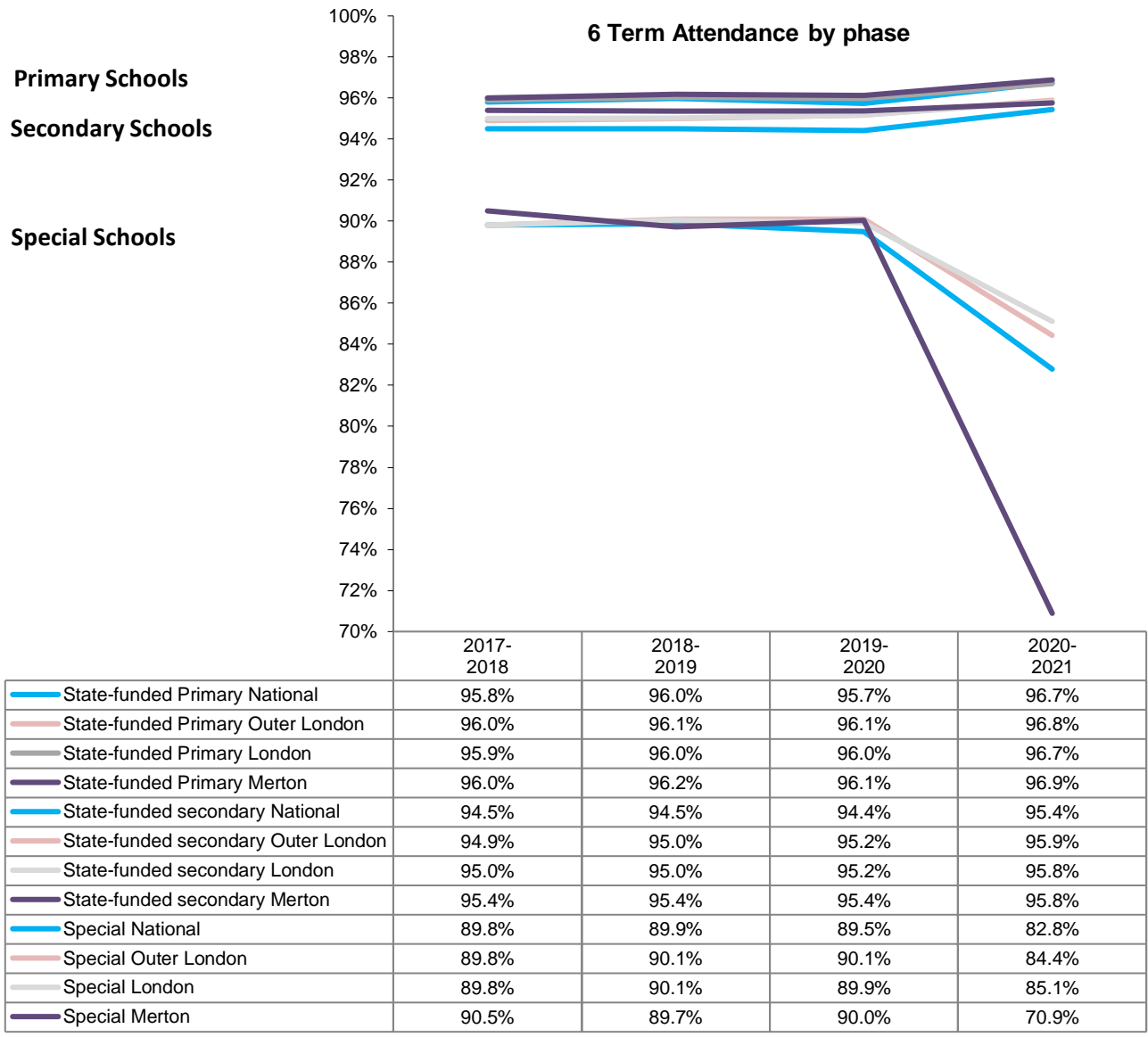
5.1.3 Attendance is also measured using the data covering six terms (full academic year). For the academic year 2021/22, this data will not be available until later in March this year, and so Merton’s performance using this data is presented below up until 2020/21.

**6 term Attendance: Primary and Secondary Schools combined**

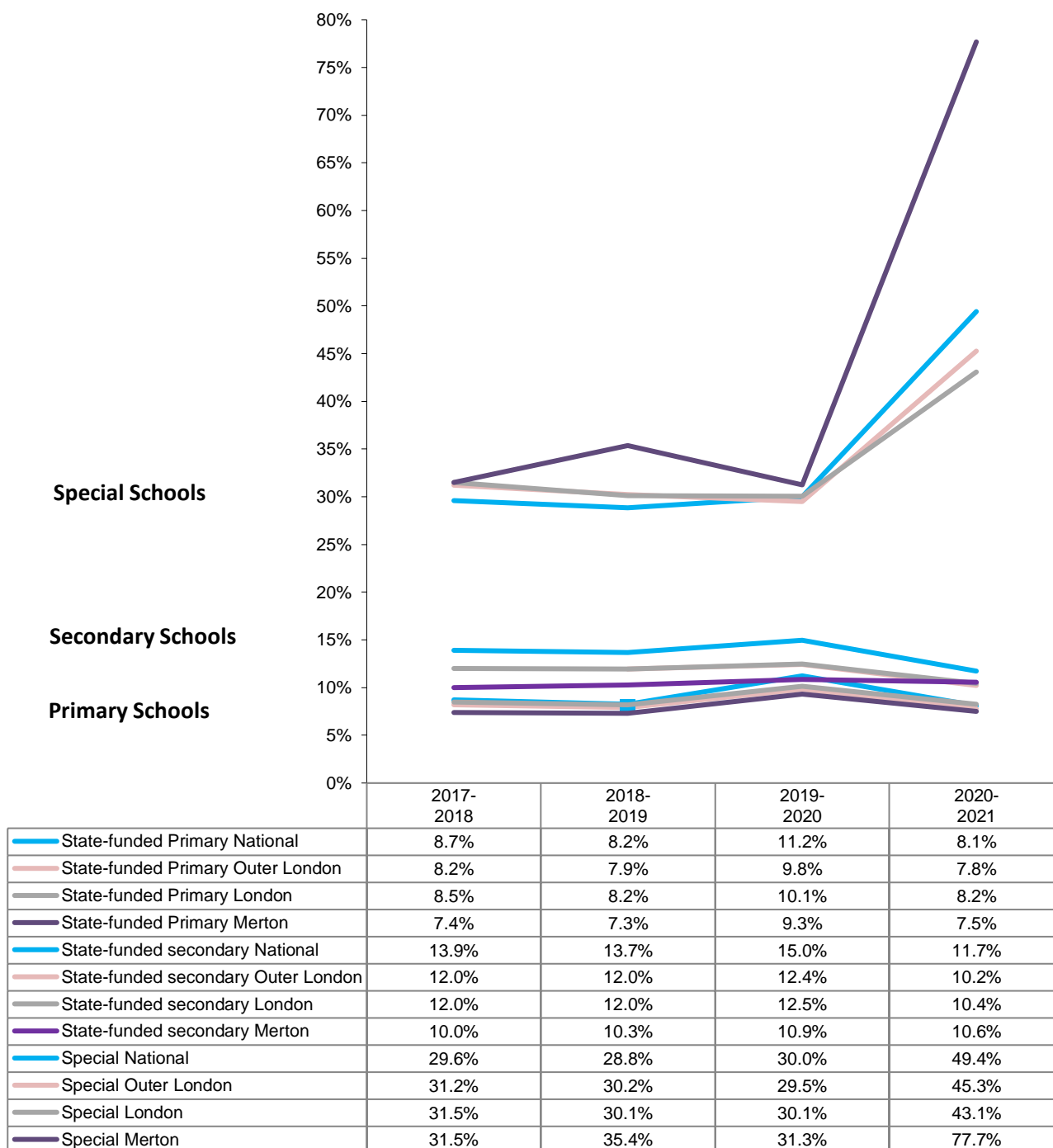


**6 Term Persistent Absence (10%): Primary and Secondary Schools combined**





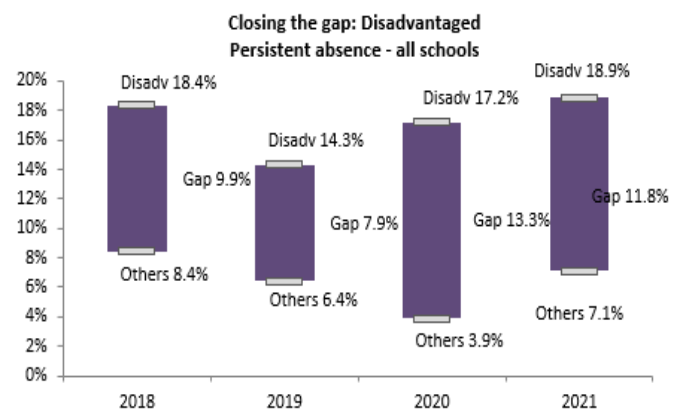
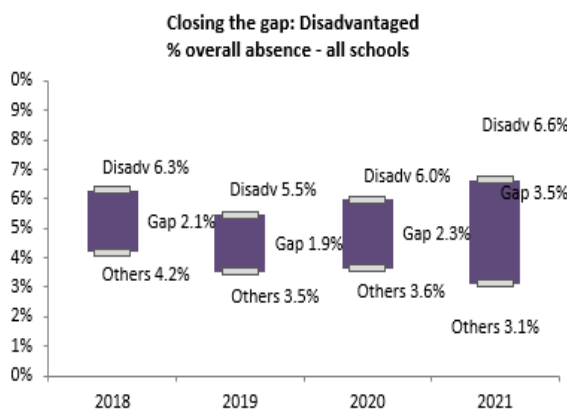
### 6 Term Persistent Absence (10%) by phase



5.1.4 Using the six term data for 2020/21, attendance in Merton is above the most recent national and London comparative data in primary and secondary schools. Primary and secondary schools are seeing a rising trend in the area of school attendance.

5.1.5 The persistent absence figure for primary and secondary has fallen following a slight rise in 2019/20, mirroring the national.

5.1.6 Attendance in special schools has fallen for three years and is below London and national comparators. Levels of Persistent Absence in special schools have fallen slightly and are in line with outer London. This may be to do with higher levels of illness for children with disabilities. The new category of Severe Absence (under50% ) has been established by the Government. The 4 terms data shows SA for special school is particularly high. The low attendance levels is influenced considerably by the very low attendance levels of a small number of children.



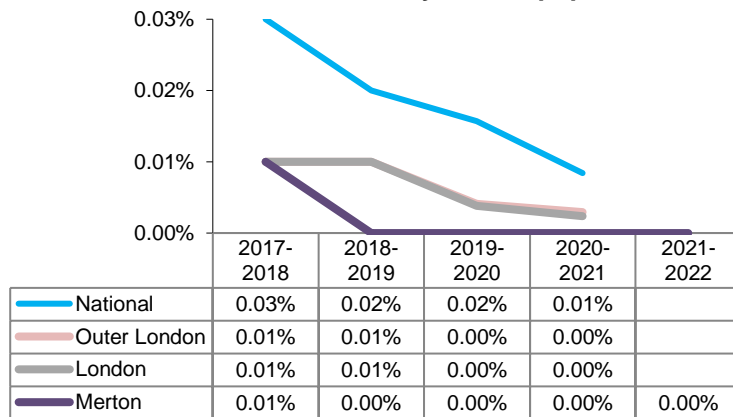
5.1.7 The gap between disadvantaged and all pupils is closing in terms of attendance and PA.

# Exclusions performance information and analysis

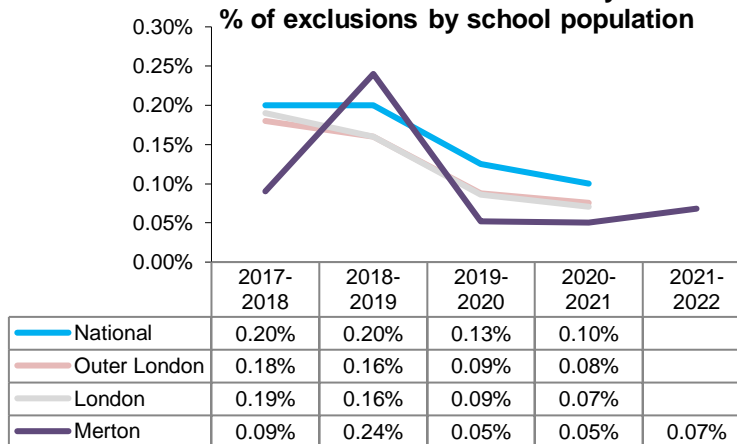
## Headline data and analysis

5.2.1 Merton data is available for 2021 -2022, but the most recent data available for the national and London averages is from 2020-2021.

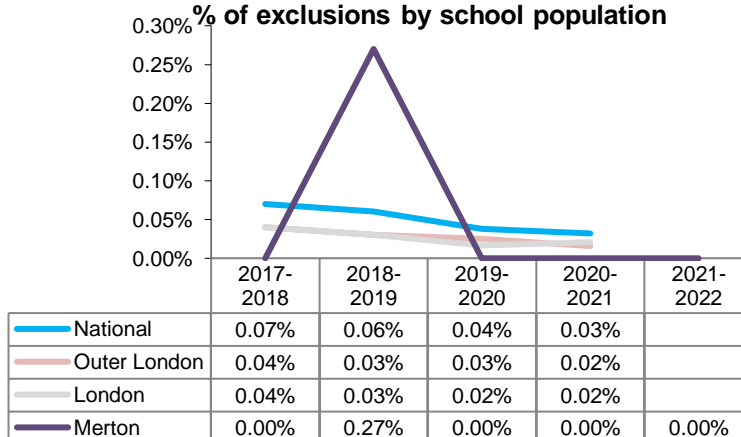
**Permanent Exclusions: Primary Schools**  
% of exclusions by school population



**Permanent Exclusions: Secondary Schools**  
% of exclusions by school population



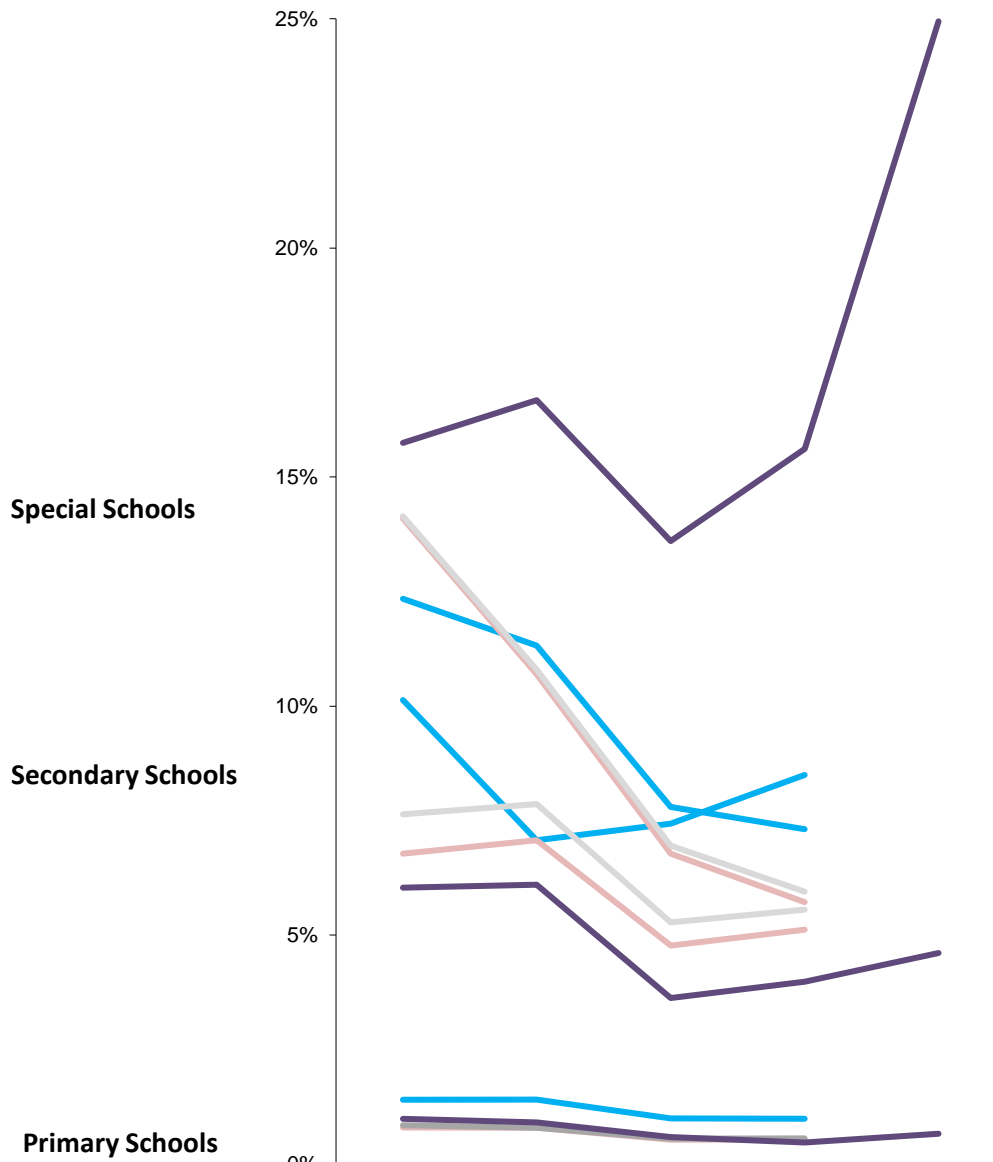
**Permanent Exclusions: Special Schools**  
% of exclusions by school population



- 5.2.2 Merton had no primary or special school permanent exclusions in 2021-2022. This was achieved through ongoing significant and complex inclusion work carried out by primary schools and the Local Authority's Virtual Behaviour Service (VBS).
- 5.2.3 The number of permanent exclusions in secondary schools has increased slightly but remains below the national average and in lines with London averages.
- 5.2.4 There were 12 additional potential permanent exclusions that were prevented in secondary schools as a result of our partnership work with families, as well as with the VBS, schools and Melbury College. This is a fall from 26 in the previous year and back in line with 19/20. Together with the small rise in permanent exclusions in secondaries, this is evidence of the level of complex cases presenting in schools.



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



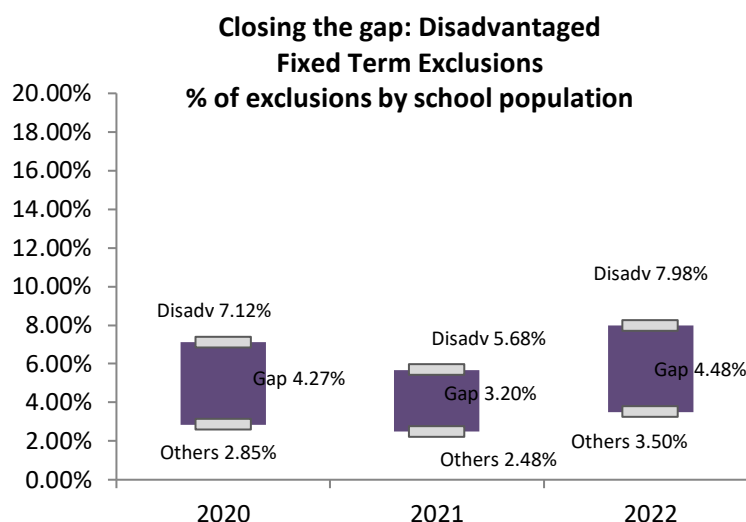
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Primary National	1.40%	1.41%	1.01%	0.99%	
Primary Outer London	0.80%	0.79%	0.54%	0.54%	
Primary London	0.85%	0.80%	0.56%	0.56%	
Primary Merton	0.99%	0.91%	0.59%	0.47%	0.66%
Secondary National	10.13%	7.07%	7.43%	8.49%	
Secondary Outer London	6.78%	7.07%	4.77%	5.11%	
Secondary London	7.63%	7.86%	5.28%	5.55%	
Secondary Merton	6.04%	6.10%	3.63%	3.98%	4.60%
Special National	12.34%	11.32%	7.79%	7.31%	
Special Outer London	14.09%	10.69%	6.78%	5.72%	
Special London	14.14%	10.79%	6.96%	5.95%	
Special Merton	15.74%	16.67%	13.60%	15.61%	24.94%

- 5.2.5 The number of fixed term exclusions has risen slightly in primary schools and, though the rate is below that seen nationally, is just above the London averages. This data has been further analysed and we know it relates in part to a small number of pupils with multiple exclusions.
- 5.2.6 The number of fixed term exclusions in secondary schools has risen slightly but is below London and national averages.
- 5.2.7 The comparative data that allows analysis of fixed term exclusions by reason is not yet available.
- 5.2.8 The figures for fixed term exclusions in Special Schools are based on small cohorts, with individual exclusions therefore being recorded as a high percentage. Nevertheless, the significant rise is concerning and will be monitored closely.

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

Contextual Groups	Number of Pupils	Fixed Term Exclusions: Secondary % of exclusions by school population		
		Merton 2021-22	London 2020-21	National 2020-21
All Pupils	10253	4.60%	5.55%	8.49%
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	4882	2.77%	3.65%	5.62%
Male	5371	6.27%	7.46%	11.34%
Gap		3.51%	3.81%	5.73%
<b>Disadvantaged</b>				
Disadvantaged	2519	7.98%	10.71%	20.80%
All other pupils	7734	3.50%	4.08%	5.64%
Gap		4.48%	6.63%	15.16%
<b>Special Educational Needs (SEN)</b>				
No Special Educational Needs	8402	2.65%	4.12%	6.16%
SEN Support	1521	12.03%	14.52%	22.82%
SEN (with Statement or EHC plan)	330	20.00%	17.40%	27.27%
<b>Ethnic Group</b> (White British and six largest or priority ethnic minority groups)				
White British	2769	5.78%	6.44%	9.53%
White Other	1968	4.78%	5.10%	5.67%
Asian Other	1279	1.25%	3.99%	5.30%
Black African	985	6.50%	6.32%	6.01%
Asian Pakistani	594	1.52%	3.16%	5.49%
Mixed Other	1232	5.36%	6.57%	7.57%
Black Caribbean	452	6.64%	12.23%	12.69%

*FSM was used in calculating the disadvantaged table*



5.2.9 The gap between exclusions for disadvantaged pupils and all pupils excluded has risen slightly but in Merton the numbers of disadvantaged students excluded and the gap with their peers both remain significantly below the national and London averages.

5.2.10 Fixed term exclusions of pupils in receipt of SEN Support have risen (from 6.68% to 12.03%) but are below national and London averages for the same group. Fixed term exclusions for children with EHCPs are higher than those for SEN support, and are above those for the same group across London but are better than the national average.

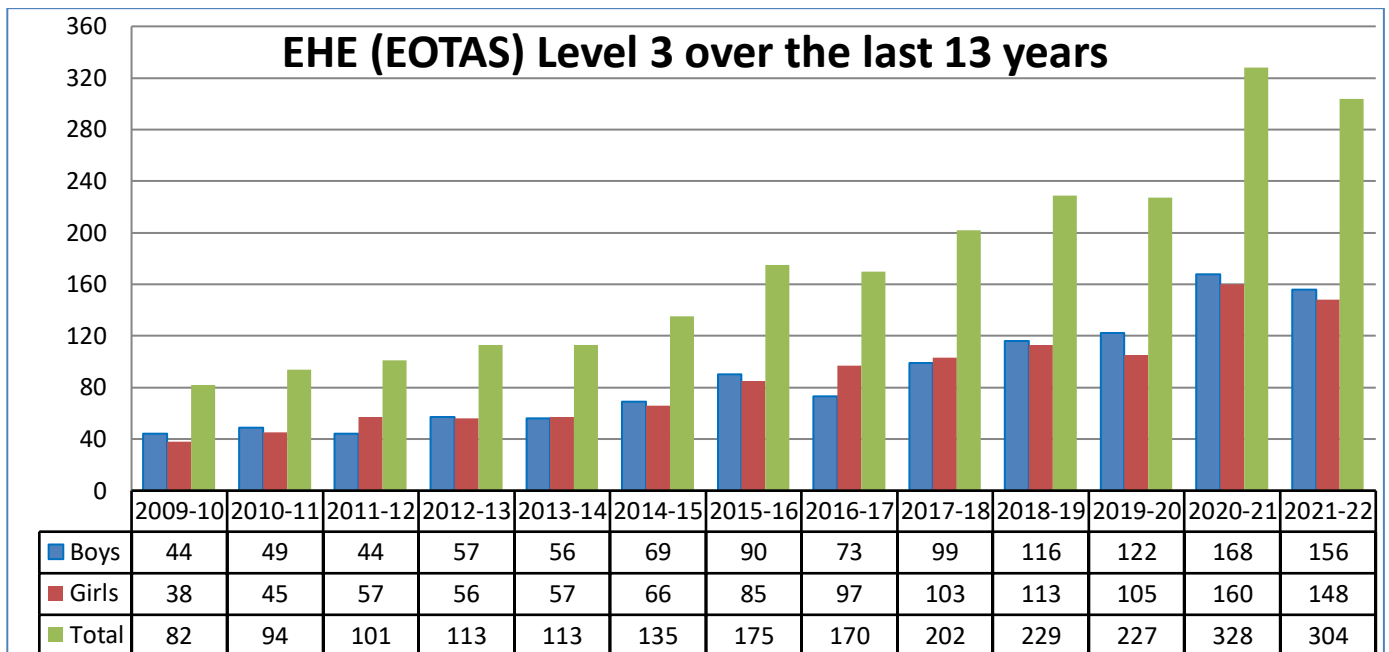
5.2.11 Fixed term exclusion for Black Caribbean pupils are still disproportionate but less so than in 2020/21 (when the rate of exclusions was 8.24%). Black African pupils are excluded at a higher rate than nationally and across London, and numbers have risen over the past year.

## 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, which was mirrored nationally, and for which the impact of the pandemic was cited as a key reason, there has been a small drop this year. Nevertheless, numbers remain high and are considerably above pre-pandemic levels at both the primary and secondary phases. Over the past decade, numbers have risen by over 200%, with the larger rise being seen in the primary phase. The numbers of boys and girls being electively home educated are broadly similar. The numbers starting to be home educated in Reception and in Year 7 remain higher than in other year groups, resulting in overall spikes at the beginning of both the primary and secondary phases.

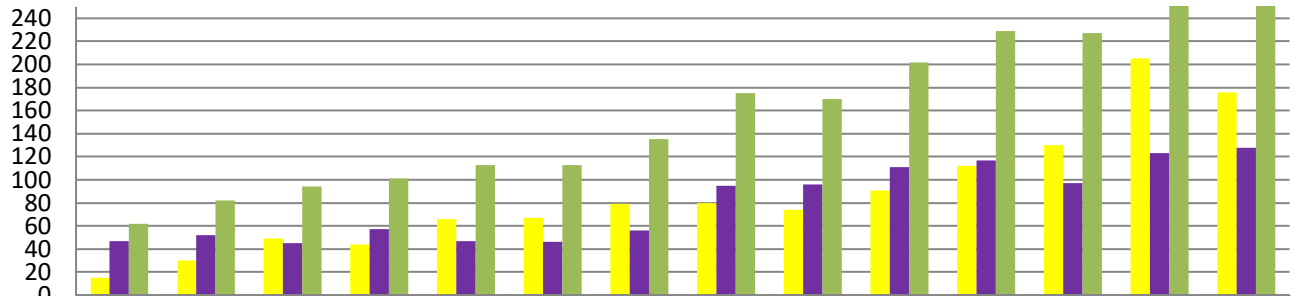
5.3.2 There has been a rise in the number of electively home educated children with EHCPs. The families work closely with SENDIS to meet the children’s needs.

5.3.3



5.3.4

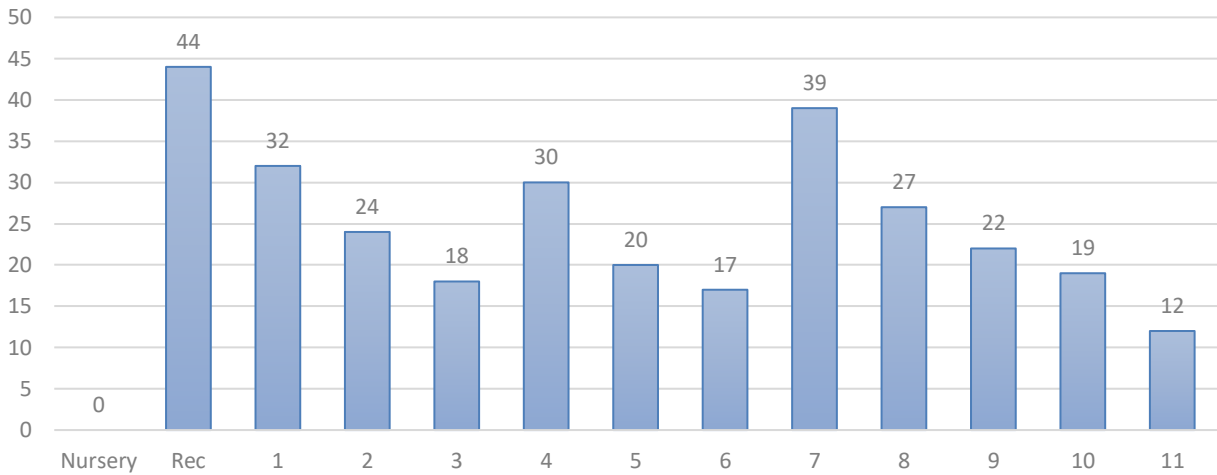
### EHE (EOTAS) Level 3 Primary / Secondary Split



	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Primary	15	30	49	44	66	67	79	80	74	91	112	130	205	176
Secondary	47	52	45	57	47	46	56	95	96	111	117	97	123	128
Total	62	82	94	101	113	113	135	175	170	202	229	227	328	304

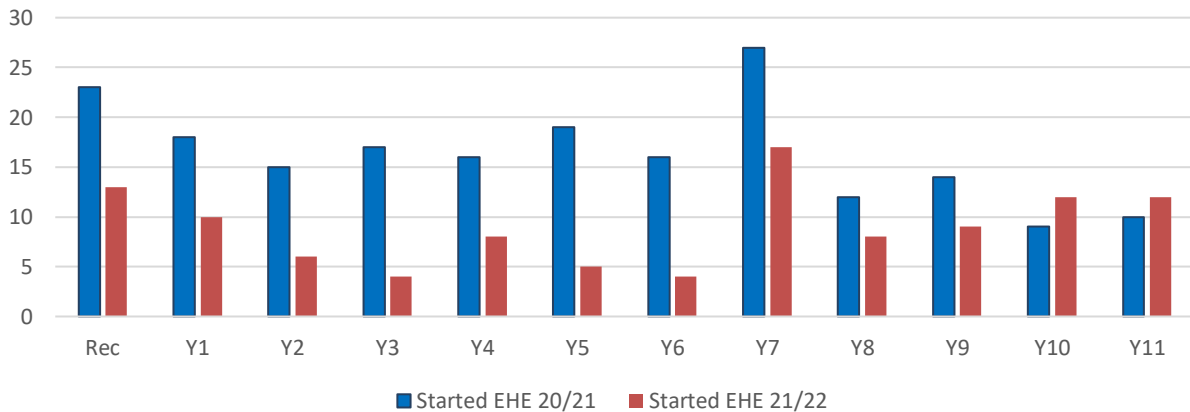
5.3.5

### Number of EHE Pupils by actual year groups in 2021-22



5.3.6

### Comparison of EHE by Yr group 20-21 & 21-22



- 5.3.7 In 2021-22 only 4% of families chose to have a home visit – and this is probably a residual effect from the pandemic. 28% of families chose to provide evidence in the form of reports or information to allow reviews. The majority of families (68%) chose to join a video meeting to allow a review to their education provision. Pre – pandemic (2018-19) 55% of families electively home educating their children chose to have a home visit or meeting for a review of the education provision; this represents a downward trend (77%, 68%). 45% of families provided evidence in the form of reports or to allow reviews (an increase from 29.6% in 2017/18). The majority of reviews are now online.
- 5.3.8 If there are concerns about the efficiency and suitability of the education provided, the EWS and Merton School Improvement will agree actions. Monthly meetings were held with the Elective Home Education Advisors to ensure that reviews of the home education were completed on time and to enable discussion of cases.
- 5.3.9 In 2021-22 the home educated child was present at 69% of reviews either in person or via a video call. In 2018/19 pre pandemic the child was present at 93% of the home visits/meetings. The advisor can encourage that the child is on the video call but cannot insist. 6 families in the academic year 2021-22 advised that they were unable to continue to provide education and their children became CME. 3 additional children were deemed to be CME and were advised to cease EHE as they had had two consecutive reviews deemed “not appropriate”. This is a significant reduction from 2018/19 when the figures were 16 and 11. Thus the education support offered was deemed appropriate in more cases that previously
- 5.3.10 In the absence of any information being provided by a family/carer, Merton will assume no education is occurring and proceed accordingly. In 2021 to 2022 five School Attendance Order (SAO) were commenced; we did not issue any SAO’s as the first stage letter was enough to encourage a response. This was a rise from 3 in 2018/19
- 5.3.11 On registering a child as being home educated, checks are made for any safeguarding concerns. If there are concerns, the lead professional is informed of the change of education provision to EHE and the EWS liaise with them during the process. 5% of EHE pupils were on a CIN or CP plan in 2021/2022, representing a slight increase from previous years.
- 5.3.12 In 2021/2022 there were 90 referrals received as CME off roll notifications. Schools have been required to make this notification to the local authority since September 2016 for children who have left education provision in Merton to electively home educate. Where these children were living in other boroughs, notifications were passed on to the resident borough to ensure that the children continued in education. This is a rise from 79 in 2018/19 and is in line with the rise in cases that are electing to home educate.

## 2021/22 Inclusion priorities, impact and key actions taken

5.4.1

**Priority:** To support a return to expected levels of attendance across the school system.

**Actions taken to secure impact:**

Merton re-established post covid our expectations to attend education settings. We have also provided support for schools to improve systems around attendance. We are also making use of Merton's Mental Health in Schools Teams to support prevention and early intervention.

**Impact:**

Rates of school attendance continue to be below pre pandemic levels and is a priority area. There are now re-established systems with schools around support and challenge on attendance, and school-based plans provide support where young people's mental health is a factor. However, illness remains a significant issue in schools, with viruses spreading more following less community sharing under covid. This has impacted some communities more than others.

5.4.2

**Priority:** To support an improvement in attendance for children in special schools in particular.

**Actions taken to secure impact:**

There are targeted meetings with each special school to address issues of school attendance. Merton's Children Missing Education Panel is reviewing more children with special educational needs and disabilities. An attendance panel has also been set up at Cricket Green.

**Impact:**

Two terms data shows higher levels of attendance in Merton Special schools despite higher level of severe absence, which is an improvement.

5.4.3

**Priority:** To manage the growth in off rolling and maintain high levels of tracking.

**Actions taken to secure impact:**

Merton continues with robust tracking processes and feedback is provided to schools where off rolling data was late.

**Impact:**

We are still seeing high levels of off rolling as families move – either because of work, moving abroad or due to eviction. There continues to be high levels of mobility in the school population.

5.4.4

**Priority:** To further strengthen our work on mental health by developing another partnership so that all schools in Merton are supported.

**Actions taken to secure impact:**

The Wimbledon Partnership was established led by Bishop Gilpin School. In addition, all cluster lead headteachers attend the CAMHS board.

**Impact:**

All Merton schools can now access a Mental Health in Schools team and all schools have a whole school mental health plan.

5.4.5

**Priority:** To build a new primary Melrose base and expand Melrose offer to more children.

**Actions taken to secure impact:**

There is now in place in Melrose School a new Primary Building and sports hall. There is a new Primary school for children with Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.

**Impact:**

The school was opened in Autumn 2022 following some delay on build due to supply of materials. Children with EHCPs for SEMH no longer have to travel to out of borough schools and we have had positive feedback from parents

5.4.6

**Priority:** To maintain support for children with SEMH through Covid regulations.

**Actions taken to secure impact:**

The Merton Young Residents survey highlighted the need for a focus on Mental Health within schools. Behaviour support one-to-ones have been maintained throughout covid to support children to access school. Merton also runs termly forums for mental health leads and mental health training networks. Mental health leads training has been promoted to schools resulting in high take up. CAMHS board has an oversight of service waiting times and offer to children and families. Mental health support materials are shared regularly.

**Impact:**

Referrals to mental health services have increased and remained high. There has been an increased investment in CAMHS; however, a lag in recruitment processes means waiting time for some support remains.

## Inclusion Priorities for 2022/23

- a) To work with special schools to address lower attendance and higher suspension (fixed term exclusion) rates
- b) 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
- c) To develop an offer for emotionally based school avoidance in line with the I-thrive model
- d) To develop an approach across all school support services to build ordinarily available SEND capacity in schools.
- e) To establish a new base for the Merton Medical Education Service and expand the offer for children out of school with medical needs



# Appendices

## Appendix A: Ofsted outcomes by school as of September 2022

Outstanding	Good	Requiring improvement	Inadequate
<p><b>Primary</b> Bishop Gilpin Dundonald 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</p>	<p><b>Primary</b> Abbotsbury All Saints Bond Cranmer Garfield Gorringe Park Haslemere Hatfeild Hillcross Hollymount Joseph Hood Liberty Links Lonesome Malmesbury Merton Abbey Morden Pelham Poplar Sacred Heart SS Peter &amp; Paul St John Fisher St Mark's St Mary's St Matthews St Teresa's 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> Smart Centre</p> <p><b>Academies &amp; Free Schools</b> Beecholme Park Community St Mark's Academy</p>	<p><b>Primary</b>  <b>Academies</b> Stanford</p>	<p><b>Primary</b>  <b>Academies</b> Benedict</p>
<p><b>Not yet inspected:</b> Harris Wimbledon</p>			

## Appendix B: Context for 2021/22

1. In 2021 – 2022, Merton schools remained open and provided a face-to-face education for all children whilst managing outbreaks of infections, high levels of staff illness and absences and the budget pressures of using agency staffing when it was available. Throughout all of this, headteachers sought to provide children once again with the social, cultural and curriculum enrichment experiences of plays and performances, school trips and residentials, visits and visitors, school fetes and fund-raising events.
2. There were three lockdowns during the Covid pandemic of 2020 – 2021 when only the children of front-line workers and children identified as vulnerable were attending school. The Children’s Commissioner reported data from interviews conducted over five days at the end of April 2020, which indicated, of that sample, 96% were not attending school (94.9% of children 12 and under and 97.8% 13+). The autumn term of 2021/22 in particular was further disrupted by the pandemic, even though there were no lockdowns. Students who sat their A levels in 2022 had never sat a public examination before and those who sat their GCSEs did not know until January 2022 whether or not they would be examined. Although there were no further lockdowns in 2021/22, attendance continued to be affected in relation to outbreaks and requirements to self-isolate throughout the year.
3. Key focuses for school leaders during the academic year 2021 – 2022 included:
  - Addressing the impact of remote learning, lockdowns and of illness and death within families and communities upon children’s resilience, anxiety, confidence, behaviour, social skills and aptitudes/habits for learning;
  - Responding to and supporting parental concerns with regards to:
    - infections and Covid vaccinations;
    - attendance – including managing parental ‘push back’ when schools communicated a return to high expectations for pupil attendance;
    - the personal and economic challenges that many families continue to face;
  - Co-ordinating parental consent for and managing on-site Covid vaccination programmes, some of which initially attracted unpleasant attention from small but vociferous protest groups;
  - Managing staff workload so that staff felt supported in maintaining positive health and wellbeing and enabled to do their jobs;
  - Identifying the gaps in children’s learning - for example in phonics, oracy and their stamina for writing - and then adapting the curriculum and teaching styles in order to revisit concepts and prioritise knowledge that pupils hadn’t learned well remotely;
  - 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;
  - Managing school-led tutoring and intervention programmes and accessing hard-pressed services to support children’s mental health and wellbeing;
  - Preparing staff and children and young people for the return of statutory assessments and public examinations in summer 2022 and engaging with moderation training and activities at LA and cluster level in order to engage with teacher assessment in EYFS and KS 2 writing;
  - Managing increased numbers of safeguarding concerns particularly domestic abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment;
  - Continuing to address issues associated with racism and inequality including the impact of national and local incidents and published reviews, such as the Child Q Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review.
4. Merton schools 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. Amongst many strengths identified during the Inspection of Merton’s Local Authority Children’s Services were the effectiveness of strong and respectful safeguarding partnerships enriching

the daily lived experiences of children while making them safer. The innovative ‘Social Worker in Schools’ programme was recognised through inspection, and some schools in Merton benefit from a DSL supervision programme.

5. The Government published its Education White paper (‘Opportunity for All’) in early 2022, and followed this with a Schools’ Bill to address the aspects of their White Paper ambitions which required legislations. The White Paper set out the government’s vision for education, which included:

- a range of programmes for teacher development and recruitment
- additional support for schools to secure the fundamentals of behaviour, attendance and wellbeing for all
- various interventions to target support to those who need it most
- introducing a fully trust-led system with a singular regulatory body

The paper identified a number of initiatives to address this vision. As of the date of writing this report the following initiatives from the paper had been delivered:

- Scholarships for language graduates
- ITT course to get engineers teaching physics
- ‘National data solution’ for attendance tracking
- Updated national music education plan
- At least £100 million to fund the Education Endowment Foundation
- £86 million in trust capacity funding
- Powers to force “coasting” schools to convert or change trusts
- Regional schools commissioners rebranded as regional directors
- Priority education investment areas targeted for new academically focused 16-19 free schools

Other aspects remain on track for delivery including:

- Digital service to recognise international teaching qualifications and relocation premium
- Literacy and numeracy sample test for year 9s
- Network of modern foreign language hubs from 2023
- New cultural education plan
- Turn Oak Academy into an arms length curriculum body
- Tutoring to become a “core academic option” funded by the pupil premium and a “vibrant tutoring market” from 2024
- Transparency for MAT top-slicing
- £40 million for 24 priority education investment areas
- New system of proactive assurance with safeguarding audits every three years

The Schools’ Bill was pulled from the parliamentary process late in 2023, following a change of leadership within the Government, and as of the time of writing this report, it is not clear which of the initiatives within the paper and Bill which have yet to be delivered are to be pursued.

6. The Government also published its SEND Green Paper (‘SEND Review: Right support, Right place, Right time ‘). This Green Paper was consulted on over 2022 but the Government’s response is yet to be published. The Paper sets out the government’s proposals to ensure that every child and young person has their needs identified quickly and met more consistently. This includes:

- establishing a single national special educational needs and disability (SEND) and alternative provision (AP) system that sets clear standards for the provision that children and young people should expect to receive;
- strengthened accountabilities and investment that will help to deliver real change for children, young people and their families;
- creating a single national system that has high aspirations and ambitions for children and young people with SEND and those in AP, which is financially sustainable.

## **Appendix C: School Improvement in Merton**

### **The Principles**

1. Merton Local Authority continued to secure the improvement of its schools during 2021/22, 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. 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 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 Advisors, 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's School Improvement Strategy**

4. Merton refreshed its School Improvement Strategy for 2021 – 2022 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.

### **Partnership working**

5. Collaboration between Merton schools is strong, and Merton recognises that building on this strength is of paramount importance in seeking to secure the best outcomes for Merton's children and young people. The following are key existing mechanisms for collaboration and partnership working within Merton.
6. The majority of Merton schools are members of local school clusters. These are organised as follows:
  - East Mitcham
  - Mitcham Town

- Morden
- West Wimbledon
- Wimbledon

In 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.

7. 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.
8. Merton Leaders in Education (MLEs) provide school level support for leadership. This is a local programme, based on the local leaders in education programme. Working within a local programme, MLEs are able to bring a local knowledge of systems and of high expectations for Merton children and young people.
9. Primary Expert Teachers (PETs) come from Merton's pool of excellent teachers, and provide hands on support for primary teachers in the classroom, focusing in particular on English and mathematics.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. Where expertise is not yet available locally, Merton looks to draw on the expertise of education professionals further afield. These include National Leaders in Education (NLEs), National Leaders of Governance (NLGs) and Teaching School Alliances located outside Merton.

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

15. 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

16. The Merton School Improvement 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).

### **Targeted support and challenge**

17. All maintained schools continue to be linked to a MEP, and receive at least two visits a year. During these visits, leaders and governors are challenged and supported, particularly with reference to the areas covered by the Ofsted framework, including safeguarding. Where schools are evaluating themselves to be less than good, or where there were concerns about performance, support from the MEP increases. Advisors 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.
18. Where schools are identified as facing particular challenges (for example, they had an Ofsted judgement that judged them to require improvement, or a range of data indicated that there was a risk of a drop from a good or outstanding judgement), a 'Support and Challenge Group' is implemented.
19. A Support and Challenge Group may be provided to schools causing concern in any area of the Ofsted framework for the inspection of schools related to achievement, teaching, behaviour and safety, and leadership and management. The LA uses the most robust intelligence available to determine whether a school might be causing concern.
20. 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.
21. 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.
22. Recognising that a range of factors underpin the effectiveness of schools, 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
  - Equalities and Diversity Team
  - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Integrated Service (SENDIS)
  - Virtual Behaviour Service
  - Language and Learning Support Team
  - Children's Social Care
  - Education Welfare Service
  - Traveller Education Service
  - Early Years' Service
23. Drawing on the range of information available, including pupil achievement data and schools' most recent Ofsted inspection outcome, support for schools is targeted towards those that require it

most. Following an initial in-depth analysis of the information and deployment of resources at the beginning of the school year, support continues to be adapted throughout the year as situations change.

### **Universal offer for schools**

24. The universal offer for all schools, including central training, is also devised based on the knowledge of local school needs and in the context of the national education agenda. The MEP programme provides a framework for school self-evaluation, and a quality assurance function, giving external verification to self-evaluation for all schools. In general, the MSI team has supported schools with the following this year:
- updates on national changes and developments;
  - a quality assurance and accreditation programme for Early Career Teachers (ECTs);
  - guidance on assessment, and the collection, presentation and analysis of pupil achievement data;
  - identification and sharing of local and national good practice;
  - guidance in identifying, analysing, planning for and monitoring required improvements;
  - preparation for Ofsted;
  - advice and guidance to ensure any priorities identified in inspection are addressed;
  - training, coaching and advice on the curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and teaching and learning; and
  - general support for leadership.
25. Many of the services listed in the section above ('Universal Offer for Schools') also offer a buy back service through service level agreements for all Merton schools.

### **Local Authority Statutory Functions**

26. Local authorities continue to have key statutory functions in relation to the education of its children and young people, and hence to securing the improvement of its schools. These include ensuring that 'education functions are exercised with a view to promoting high standards ensuring fair access to opportunity for education and learning, and promote the fulfilment of learning potential'.
27. In order to promote high standards, the DfE has identified that local authorities have considerable freedom as to how they deliver their statutory responsibilities. Most importantly they should:
- Understand the performance of maintained schools in their area, using data as a starting point to identify any that are underperforming, while working with them to explore ways to support progress;
  - Work closely with the relevant Regional Director (RD) and other local partners to ensure schools receive the support they need to improve;
  - Where underperformance has been recognised in a maintained school, proactively work with the relevant RSC, combining local and regional expertise to ensure the right approach, including sending warning notices and using intervention powers where this will improve leadership and standards; and
  - Encourage good and outstanding maintained schools to take responsibility for their own improvement; support other schools; and enable other schools to access the support they need to improve.
28. In addition, when delivering their school improvement function, local authorities must have regard to the 'Schools Causing Concern' (SCC) statutory guidance. This was updated and reissued in September 2022.
29. In particular, the guidance identifies the role of RD in SCC, exercising powers on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education. The guidance clarifies that the RD should work with local authorities to build 'a supportive schools culture' to 'work with school leaders to drive school improvement'.



30. The guidance identifies the processes local authorities can take with RDs may take in SCC that are eligible for intervention
31. Local authorities and RDs may give warning notices to maintained schools where they have concerns about unacceptable educational performance (including results below the floor standards), a breakdown in leadership and governance, or where the safety of pupils or staff may be being threatened. Where a maintained school does not comply with a warning notice, it will become eligible for formal intervention.
32. Formal intervention by LAs is defined as the power to:
  - require the governing body to enter into arrangements;
  - appoint additional governors;
  - appoint an interim executive board (IEB);
  - suspend the delegated budget.
33. The RD also has the power to:
  - direct closure of a school;
  - take over responsibility for an IEB;
  - make an academy order.
34. In schools that have been judged inadequate by Ofsted, an academy order will be issued by the RSC, requiring them to become sponsored academies.

## Appendix D: 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>0.52</b>	<b>0.45</b>	<b>0.60</b>	<b>53.6</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>57%</b>
<b>National (maintained schools)</b>	<b>-0.03</b>			<b>48.8</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>Secondary Schools</b>								
Harris Academy Merton	0.49	0.29	0.68	52.9	26%	18%	72%	53%
Harris Academy Morden	0.19	-0.04	0.42	47.5	32%	23%	64%	40%
Raynes Park High School	0.22	-0.02	0.46	46.3	19%	10%	70%	52%
Ricards Lodge High School	0.96	0.77	1.15	60.9	53%	44%	83%	68%
Rutlish School	0.72	0.53	0.91	58.0	43%	30%	86%	63%
St Mark's Church of England Academy	0.59	0.31	0.87	47.0	25%	14%	62%	38%
Ursuline High School Wimbledon	0.72	0.52	0.92	62.1	47%	37%	89%	72%
Wimbledon College	0.61	0.40	0.82	59.5	57%	39%	90%	70%
<b>Special Schools</b>								
Cricket Green School	SUPP	SUPP	SUPP	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE
Melrose School	-4.12	-4.77	-3.47	2.9	0%	0%	6%	6%
Perseid School	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE	NE

## Appendix E: 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>B-</b>	<b>38.25</b>	<b>20.8%</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>38.97</b>
<b>National (state-funded schools and colleges)</b>	<b>B-</b>	<b>37.86</b>	<b>20.7%</b>	<b>B-</b>	<b>38.25</b>
<b>Secondary Schools</b>					
Harris Academy Merton	B-	36.80	10.7%	B	38.63
Raynes Park High School	B	39.31	31.6%	B	40.70
Ricards Lodge High School	B	40.15	19.2%	B	40.13
Rutlish School	B	40.00	31.6%	B	41.58
St Mark's Church of England Academy	B-	37.11	15.4%	B-	35.90
Ursuline High School Wimbledon	B-	36.35	12.4%	B-	36.69
Wimbledon College	B	39.41	28.7%	B	40.18
<b>Sixth Form Centre/Consortia</b>					
RR6	B	40.05	28.4%	B	41.21

## Appendix F: 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
CSF	Children, Schools 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
ETE	Education Training and Employment
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
PET	Primary Expert Teacher
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
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

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

**Date: 13th March 2023**

Wards: All

### **Subject: Departmental Update**

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: Maisie Davies - Head of Performance, Improvement and Partnerships

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### **Recommendations:**

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

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## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The report provides members of the panel with information on key developments affecting the Children, Lifelong Learning and Families (CLLF) Department, and not covered elsewhere on the agenda. It focuses on those aspects of particular relevance to the department.

## **2 DETAILS**

### **CHILDREN, LIFELONG LEARNING & FAMILIES**

- 2.1 The Children, Lifelong Learning and Families (CLLF) Directorate has continued to be busy since the last update in February 2023. The items in this departmental update cover some key items of interest for members, including our work supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, our foster carer recruitment and the accommodation support we provide for care leavers.
- 2.2 I am also delighted to report that in February CLLF was shortlisted for the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) 2023 'Children's Services' Award. This is a testament to the commitment, passion, and creativity of staff across the Department which contributes to positive outcomes for children and young people living and learning in Merton. Personally, I am also proud to have been shortlisted for the LGC 2023 'Outstanding Individual' Award in my role as Director of Children's Services (DCS) for Merton. This nomination would not have been possible without the support of my colleagues across CLLF, and also our corporate and political leadership. The LGC Award winners will be announced at an event in June 2023; however, whatever the outcome, I am immensely proud of the Department's achievements.

### **Supporting Vulnerable Children**

## **Supporting Vulnerable Children and with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities**

- 2.2.1 As at the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023, Merton maintained 2,414 Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).
- 2.2.2 In this calendar year, the service has received 43 requests for an Education, Health, and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA), has agreed to undertake 50 EHCNAs (some of these referrals were received in December 2022), and agreed to issue 14 EHCPs.
- 2.2.3 The EHCNA process should be completed within 20 weeks. As of 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023, the year-to-date timeliness for completing an EHCNA is at 86% in the total number of EHCPs being issued within 20 weeks, excluding exceptions. Although we of course aim to ensure that all EHCPs are issued within this timescale, our performance is well above the national average, and continues to improve as a result of the concerted efforts of officers in the SENDIS team and the wider SEND partnership.
- 2.2.4 Following the annual review processes In January 2023, the Local Authority has ceased to maintain 90 EHC Plans. 21 children and young people with an EHCP moved out of Merton to another Local Authority and 1 moved abroad. In addition, 4 children and young people with an EHCP moved into Merton and their plan was adopted.

## **Access to Short Breaks and Respite Services**

- 2.3 Short breaks are activities for children and young people with a disability. The purpose of a short break is to:
- Allow the child or young person to benefit from different experiences and activities
  - Provide some respite for parents and carers from caring responsibilities
  - Informally educate (or enable) children and young people with special needs and disabilities through their leisure time to develop their own capabilities or enhance their personal and social development and confidence.
- 2.4 A short break can comprise a range of activities including:
- Overnight stays in a residential setting
  - Holiday play schemes
  - After school clubs
  - Adventure play and outdoor activities
  - Support to access inclusive mainstream services and services that are available to everyone
- 2.5 Since 1 April 2011, new government legislation was introduced placing a duty on local authorities to provide a short break service for children and young people with disabilities aged 0-18. In addition, there are various legal duties and

obligations contained within the Children's Act 2014 and the Care Act 1989 that require local authorities to make provisions to individual children and families in relation to assessment and care planning and wider commissioning

- 2.6 Details of Merton's Short Breaks offer, including specialist services commissioned by the Council for children who may not be able to independently access services, or have more complex needs can be found on the Merton website and Local Offer.
- 2.7 A review is currently being undertaken of short breaks provision in the borough, with a view to better understand the needs of children and young people, the range of services and activities available across the borough, and our current operating model. This will help to inform future service development, commissioning intentions and support CLLF's strategic priorities for meeting the needs of children with disabilities in Merton.

### **Support to young children who have been identified as having SEN (0-5)**

- 2.8 Children who are born with significant needs are often supported through health services in the early days and may also be supported through Children's Social Care depending on the level of family and child need.
- 2.9 Once it is considered appropriate, and in collaboration with the family and other agencies, a referral (mostly by a health professional) can be made to the Council's Portage and Parenting service. The staff provide a range of services for children aged 0 - 5 including:
  - Home visiting (0 – 3s) where an early education programme is developed based on the child's individual needs. With the advice, encouragement and support from the member of staff the family work through this small steps programme so that the child can make progress and develop in accordance with their individual plan. The staff member will work with the family over a considerable period of time and will also support the family with applications for benefits i.e. Disability Living Allowance, attend appointments, liaise with professionals and help the family navigate the range of support services that may be of benefit.
  - Parenting programmes which are attended by groups of parents whose children may have social and communication delay and be waiting for or have an ASD diagnosis. The Incredible Years programme is an evidenced based programme of 14 – 16 sessions which is offered to parents of young children (aged 2-5) on the Autism spectrum or with language delays in order to promote children's emotional regulation, social competence, language skills, school readiness, and relationships with others.
  - Group drop in sessions are available for families to come in and talk to staff and meet other families. These sessions are play based and provide parents an opportunity to see their children play alongside other children, mutually support each other and find out about various services that can help them through the staff that run the groups. There is always a lot of mess, singing

and music, and children can get involved in their own way in a supportive environment.

- 2.10 Services that are run through Children's Centres are also available to families, including universal groups and health provision.
- 2.11 Families who have children with significant needs, will require varying and individualised service support and these are accessed through a wide range of professionals across the education, health and care sector. As part of our work, staff work with families to help them think about their child starting nursery from the age of 2. Staff will support them to find a suitable place across the early years sector that can best meet their needs, and supporting planning and resourcing to facilitate a smooth transition into provision.

### **Foster Carer Recruitment**

- 2.12 After a particularly difficult year in 2021/2022, when we only recruited 5 mainstream foster carers, 1 connected carer and 1 supported lodgings carer, this year we are on track to recruit 10 foster carers (6 already approved and 4 due at the March fostering panel), 2 connected carers and 1 supported lodgings carer. Previous years spends had been boosted by a 5-year grant to target carers for Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers which ended in 2021.
- 2.13 Alongside the banners we place around the borough, we are looking to extend our digital campaign which has generated the most enquiries and conversions to approvals. So far this year it has generated the most enquiries and approvals. We plan to target the LGBTQ+ community, faith groups and specifically focus on recruiting and developing our current carers to be better equipped to care for children experiencing contextual harm.
- 2.14 We have seen an increase in the number of resignations which highlights the need to focus on retention just as much as recruitment. The central government has just announced a 12.43% increase to the minimum fostering allowances and a paper is being readied to increase Merton's fostering rates. This will include a proposal to waive council tax to those living in the borough. Historically, we have good approval conversion through word of mouth, but this has dropped off this year. We believe that the above actions and increasing the finder's fee will help to improve this.

### **Care Leavers Accommodation**

- 2.15 Merton is currently reliant on spot purchasing from the semi-independent living market to meet the needs of care experienced young people who have moved on from the care placements (usually foster care) and are yet to obtain their own tenancy. Due to significant housing pressures in Merton and wider London, many young people who are ready and able to manage their own tenancies remain in semi-independent accommodation, which is expensive.



- 2.16 It is our goal to enable young people to live independently by the time they turn 21 years old. Merton has a strong focus on 'Staying Put' arrangements which allow young people to remain in their foster homes post-18. Ideally, they would transition straight from their staying put arrangement into their own tenancy prior to the age of 21 (unless it is not compatible with their education plans). For young people who are not ready to manage their own tenancy, we spot purchase from the semi-independent living market, which provides accommodation alongside generalised key work support.
- 2.17 Merton's approach to improving our care leaver accommodation is in three parts:
- Increasing our in house accommodation options
  - Creating our own accommodation framework
  - Reviewing how we discharge our housing duty to care leavers
- 2.18 Increasing our in house accommodation options: a successful business case was made for five Merton owned properties (formerly school caretaker houses) to be transformed into temporary accommodation for care experienced young people. Three of the houses are now vacant and arrangements are being made for the building work to be completed. The properties should be available for young people to move in towards the end of April. A matching meeting has taken place to identify the young people who we will offer to live in the properties. The remaining two properties still have tenants residing in them but are due to vacate soon.
- 2.19 Creating our own accommodation framework: to address our overreliance on spot purchasing from the Semi-Independent Living market a successful business case was made to create our own in house framework. The project is almost at the stage where 'Invitations to Tender' can be sent out and the tender process will be commencing in April. The framework will have four lots:
1. Standard Semi-Independent provider as currently used (accommodation plus 5-15 hours of key work support).
  2. Accommodation with an increased level of landlord/lady support (where the landlord/lady checks in on the house and occupants on a regular basis).
  3. Accommodation (without the additional keywork support)
  4. Providers of support – which will enable us to commission bespoke support for any young person's needs, which can follow them across any of the other lots and even when they enter their own tenancy.
- 2.20 One full time member of staff is being recruited to manage the properties and the framework set out above. A key part of managing the framework will be ensuring that they have up to date knowledge of all local resources to ensure that we are only commissioning key work support when that need cannot be met through already existing services.

- 2.21 Reviewing how we discharge our housing duty to care leavers: senior leaders in Children, Lifelong Learning and Families and Communities and Housing recently reviewed the social housing needs of care experienced young people. A number of ongoing issues in both the private and social housing market currently make it challenging to discharge our housing duty towards many care experienced young people to support them into their own tenancy prior to the age of 21. Despite significant housing pressures in Merton, the Housing Department has protected the Children Act quota of 15 tenancies per year and, on average, provides more than the agreed 15. To meet the housing needs of our care experienced young people and discharge our housing duty to them through social tenancies, would require Merton more than doubling the Children Act housing quota. However, increases to the Children Act quota would impact negatively on other vulnerable priority groups.
- 2.22 In light of the above, a recommendation is being made to further develop the strategies in Merton that deal with housing and homelessness to ensure a more joined up approach in how we discharge our housing duty to care leavers and how we provide them with temporary accommodation. Both the in house accommodation and framework will work towards improving the temporary accommodation offer and further work will be done around our strategies to support care experienced young people to gain tenancies both in the social and private sector.

### **Safety Valve**

- 2.23 The third quarterly Safety Valve monitoring report (submitted to the DfE in January) was reported to Scrutiny in February. The next quarterly update will be provided to Members in June.

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

**Date: 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

Wards: All

### **Subject: Performance Overview 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: Maisie Davies, 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 2022/23, up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022, as set out in the accompanying document, the Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel Performance Index 2022/23.

## **2 DETAILS**

### ***Exception Report***

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

No	Indicator	Rating	Service Commentary
2	% of Single Assessments authorised within the statutory 45 days	A	<p>Assessment timeliness has fallen just below the 91% target this month.</p> <p>This was due to planned changes to workflow on our management information system causing a minor technical issue, which temporarily delayed data entry for assessments. However, this issue has now been addressed and is not expected to impact future performance data.</p> <p>A recent quarterly review of the data, which captured late data entry showed</p>

			assessment timeliness at 94% across Q3.
7	% of reviews completed within timescale for Children with Child Protection Plans	R	This is an indicator that we monitor every month. Performance data shows that we consistently complete 94% and above of reviews within timescale, achieving 96% over the last quarter. However, there has been a slight dip in performance this year, taking us below the target of 99%. With leave and families being away in December this can impact timeliness of reviews. We continue to monitor the situation closely.
9	% of Children that became the subject of a Child Protection Plan (CPP) for the second or subsequent time.	R	This indicator shows the % of children with an open CPP as at the end of the period who are the subject of a CPP for the second or subsequent time.  Numbers rose from 14 in April to 30 at the end of December. Numbers have stabilised during quarter 3, with a slight reduction in the percentage at the end of December. We are closely monitoring this indicator and a thematic audit is being undertaken.
13	Average number of weeks taken to complete Care proceedings against a national target of 26 weeks.	R	Data for Q3 is yet to be published. Nationally a target of 26 weeks has been set for an authority to conclude court proceedings and to achieve a court decision. We always strive to meet the nationally set target of 26 weeks. Due to a small number of children in proceedings in Merton, delays with one family can skew our figures. See commentary below for further information.

28	Secondary school surplus places	R	See commentary below
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## 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.

2.5. As reported previously, the Assistant Director Children’s Social Care and Youth Inclusion met with Merton’s link judge who commented very positively on Merton’s PLO work. There was an acknowledgement that achieving and maintaining 26 weeks timescales for care proceedings across London and across the country is problematic; impacted on by significant District Judge vacancy rates and delayed Court timescales. There are some challenging and long-standing cases due to complexities and need for additional expert assessments; however, these are exceptional.

*Indicator 28: Secondary school surplus places*

2.6. Surplus places in secondary school year 7 have reduced from 3.2% to 2.4%, remaining below the 5% target, hence has a red rating. However, as the lower roll numbers flow through from primary school there will be more surplus places in future years.

2.7. To reduce the surplus in primary schools, and within the context of the School Place Planning Strategy (which was brought to Scrutiny in autumn 2021), officers continue to review school admission numbers to reduce capacity, with two further schools reducing their reception intake in September 2022.

## 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.

3.2. Performance data is provided for the below indicators in the attached Index; however, the target and RAG rating for these indicators are under review to ensure they provide an accurate reflection of service performance across the year, as the data is cumulative. This will be reviewed in the new year alongside target setting for the next financial year. A brief service commentary is provided for information.

No	Indicator	Service Commentary
19	Number of in-house foster carers recruited	Merton places a large proportion of children with in-house foster carers. There were some challenges last year within recruitment due to the pandemic. We have refreshed our communication strategy for the new financial year. We aim to promote the Mocking Bird model and open a second cluster in 2023 which will help with recruitment.
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)	This figure shows cumulative data across the year. The proportion of children aged 0-5 years old from areas of deprivation whose families have accessed children's centre services saw a decrease over the course of the pandemic. There is now a full face to face offer from Children's Centre staff for parenting programmes etc, which are being well used. This, with the return to face to face contact from Health Visitors and other partners (who are co-located in the Children's Centres), and the

		development of a Family Hub model (as promoted by the Government) has already resulted in improvements in the proportions of relevant families accessing services and it should continue to rise.
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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 2022/23.

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Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel - Performance Index 2022/23

Please note that Year to date performance - unless otherwise stated indicates April - March

No.	Performance Indicators	Frequency	Target 2022/23	Benchmarking and trend			BRAG rating	Merton 2021/22 performance																				
				Merton 2021/22 (Subject to EOY Validation)	England	London		Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22
<b>Assessments</b>																												
1	Number of Early Help Assessments undertaken by the Authority	Monthly	Not a target measure	165	No benchmarking available	No benchmarking available	Not a target measure	5	16	9	24	22	18	14	13	12	6	16	10	6	8	15	11	14	12	13	21	19
2	% of Single Assessments authorised within the statutory 45 days	Monthly	91%	89%	87.6% (DFE 2020/21)	89% (DFE 2020/21)	Green	97%	92%	85%	66%	87%	85%	93%	94%	90%	99%	94%	95%	91%	94%	92%	97%	94%	94%	94%	93%	89%
3	% of Education, Health and Care (EHCP) Plans issued within statutory 20 week timescale (YTD Calendar Year /Monthly)	YTD/Monthly	60%	TBC	58% (DFE: SEN2 Jan 2021 for the 2020 calendar year)	61.8% (DFE: SEN2 Jan 2021 for the 2020 calendar year)	Green	63%	62%	61%	64%	61%	63%	66%	68%	71%	100%	100%	89%	81%	76%	75%	71%	77%	77%	79%	80%	81%
<b>Child protection</b>																												
4	Child Protection Plans rate per 10,000	Monthly	Not a target measure	20.5	41.4 (DFE 2020/21)	36.3 (DFE 2020/21)	Not a target measure	37.1	36.3	32.5	30.0	30.8	27.8	28.1	26.8	24.9	22.0	22.0	20.5	21.2	24.1	23.3	21.6	24.7	25.3	26.4	25.3	26.6
5	Number of children subject of a Child Protection Plan	Monthly	Not a target measure	98	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Not a target measure	176	172	154	142	146	132	133	127	119	105	105	98	101	115	111	103	118	121	126	121	127
6	% of quorate attendance at child protection conferences	Quarterly	95%	N/A	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	N/A			N/A			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	99%	99%	93.2% (DFE 2020/21)	96.7% (DFE 2020/21)	Amber	100%	97%	95%	94%	95%	98%	100%	100%	97%	100%	100%	99%	98%	94%	95%	96%	97%	98%	98%	98%	94%
8	% of Children subject of a CP Plan who had a CP visit within timescales in the month	Monthly	Not a target measure	96%	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Not a target measure	97%	97%	95%	93%	99%	91%	89%	96%	82%	90%	94%	96%	94%	86%	90%	91%	88%	95%	90%	93%	91%
9	% of Children that became the subject of a Child Protection Plan for the second or subsequent time	Monthly	<20%	14%	22.1% (DFE 2020/21)	18.4% (DFE 2020/21)	Red	16%	14%	16%	13%	14%	14%	13%	12%	11%	12%	14%	14%	14%	19%	24%	24%	25%	24%	25%	25%	24%
<b>Looked After Children</b>																												
10	Looked After Children rate per 10,000	Monthly	Not a target measure	25.8	67 (DFE 2020/21)	47 (DFE 2020/21)	Not a target measure	30.0	30.6	31.0	30.6	30.0	29.7	29.1	28.9	27.6	26.4	26.4	25.8	26.4	26.2	25.1	25.6	25.8	25.8	25.3	26.2	25.3
11	Number of Looked After Children	Monthly	Not a target measure	123	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Not a target measure	142	145	147	145	142	141	138	137	132	126	126	123	126	125	120	122	123	123	121	125	121
12	Number of UASC children and young people	Monthly	Not a target measure	19	No benchmarking available	No benchmarking available	Not a target measure	23	21	20	19	19	22	22	23	23	18	19	19	19	19	19	20	19	23	22	22	23
13	Average number of weeks taken to complete Care proceedings against a national target of 26 weeks	Quarterly	26 weeks	41	41 (CAFCASS 2020/21)	No relevant benchmarking available	Red			42			69			39			41			52			N/A		N/A	
14	% of Looked After Children cases which were reviewed within required timescales	Monthly	96%	94%	Not published	Not published	Red	99%	96%	94%	94%	97%	96%	96%	96%	98%	98%	97%	94%	94%	94%	96%	96%	98%	96%	93%	92%	98%
15	% of Looked After Children participating in their reviews in month (year to date) (excludes children aged 0 - 4)	Monthly	Not a target measure	90%	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Not a target measure	94%	88%	91%	100%	83%	73%	88%	86%	90%	94%	100%	87%	100%	80%	93%	92%	91%	100%	100%	100%	72%
16	Stability of placements of Looked After Children - number of placements (3 or more in the year)	Quarterly	11%	10%	10% (DFE 2022/23)	10% (DFE 2022/23)	Green			14.9%			12.7%			11.4%			10.3%			7.5%			4.9%		5.8%	
17	Stability of placements of Looked After Children (aged under 16) - length of placement (in care 2.5 years, placement 2 years)	Quarterly	65%	68%	70% (DFE 2020/21)	71% (DFE 2020/21)	Red			48%			64.4%			70%			68%			62%			60%		71%	
18	% of Looked After Children in foster placements who are placed with in-house foster carers	Quarterly	60%	67%	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Amber			63%			58%			62%			67%			57%			58%		60%	
19	Number of in-house foster carers recruited	Quarterly	Target under Review	7	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Target Under Review			1			2			2			2			1			2		1	
20	Number of Looked After Children who were adopted (YTD)	Monthly	Not a target measure	3	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Not a target measure	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	2	2	2	2	3	3	3
21	Number of Looked After Children for whom agency Special Guardianship Orders were granted (YTD)	Quarterly	Not a target measure	4	3800 (14% of those leaving care, DfE 2020/21)	420 (9% of those leaving care, DfE 2020/21)	Not a target measure			0			1			0			1			0			0			1
<b>Childrens Centres and Schools</b>																												
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)	Quarterly	Target under Review	32%	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Target Under Review			12%			24%			25%			32%			39%			46%		52%	

No.	Performance Indicators	Frequency	Target 2022/23	Benchmarking and trend			BRAG rating	Merton 2021/22 performance																																							
				Merton 2021/22 (Subject to EOY Validation)	England	London		Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22																			
23	% outcome of School Ofsted inspections good or outstanding (overall effectiveness)	Quarterly	95%	N/A - C19	87% (30/04/2022)	94% (30/04/2022)	Green	Ofsted dashboard			95%			95%			95%			95%			95%			96%																					
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)	Not a target measure	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	n/a	0	0	0	0																					
25	Number of Secondary* permanent exclusions (Number YTD Academic year)	Monthly	Not a target measure	5	28.5% (National exclusion statistics for AY 2019/20)	14.6% (National exclusion statistics for AY 2019/20)	Not a target measure	<5	5	13	13	13	1	2	2	3	3	3	5	5	6	7	7	n/a	1	4	9	11																			
26	Secondary *** persistent absenteeism (10% or more sessions missed)	Annual	Not a target measure		14.8% (DFE AY 2020/21)	13.1% (DFE AY 2020/21)	Not a target measure	state funded secondary (inc city tech colleges, secondary academies, inc all academies and free schools)																																							
27	% of Reception year surplus places*** (calculated October and January)	Reported Quarterly	5-10%	11.6% (Jan 2022)	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Red			8.7%			11.1%			10.8%			11.6%			11.6%			11.6%	9.7%																					
28	% of Secondary school (Year 7) surplus places *** (calculated October and January)	Reported Quarterly	5-10%	3.2% (Jan 2022)	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Red			5.6%			5.6%			3.0%			3.2%			3.2%			3.2%	2.4%																					
<b>Young People and Services</b>																																															
29	Youth service participation rate	Annual	Not a target measure	N/A	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Not a target measure																																								
30	% of CYP (16 - 17 year olds) not in education, employment or training (NEET)	Monthly	Not a target measure	1.0%	2.8% (DFE 2020/21 based on Dec - Feb average)	1.8% (DFE 2020/21 based on Dec - Feb average)	Not a target measure	1.3%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.6%	1.4%	0.9%	1.3%	1.1%	1.1%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	1.2%	0.6%	1.1%	1.5%	1.2%																			
31	% of CYP (16 - 17 year olds) education, employment or training status 'not known'	Monthly	Not a target measure	0.9%	2.0% (DFE 2020/21 based on Dec - Feb average)	1.6% (DFE 2020/21 based on Dec - Feb average)	Not a target measure	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.6%	1.1%	12.8%	2.2%	1.2%	1.1%	0.9%	0.9%	1.2%	1.4%	1.2%	1.5%	1.5%	Not published	11.3%	2.6%	0.8%																			
32	Number of First Time Entrants (FTEs) to the Youth Justice System aged 10-17 (cumulative)	Monthly	50	26	2.8 (rate per 10,000, 2021)	N/A	Green	3	4	8	10	13	14	16	18	20	23	24	28	0	2	4	5	8	10	11	12	17																			
33	Rate of proven re-offending by young people in the youth justice system - quarterly / annual (annual is 20/21)	Quarterly	Not a target measure	0	34.2% (2019/20 YJB pub)	41.8% (2019/20 YJB pub)	Not a target measure				45.5%				45.5%				40%				52.9%				27.3%				46.8%				29%				46.8%				54%				24.6%
34	Number of families who will be eligible for support under Supporting Families programme.	Quarterly	Not a target measure	325	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Not a target measure				100				175				250				325				50				130				210												
35	% of commissioned services for which quarterly monitoring was completed	Quarterly	100%	100%	No relevant benchmarking available	No relevant benchmarking available	Green				100%				100%				100%				100.0%				100%				100%				TBC												
36**	% agency social workers (HR data)	Quarterly**	Not a target measure		17.6% DFE Census Sept 2021	22.7% (DFE Census Sept 2020)	Not a target measure				28%				37%				N/A				N/A				N/A				N/A				N/A												
37**	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) <b>Combines and replaces previous indicators 7 and 15</b>	Monthly**	Not a target measure	13.0	14.36 (DFE Census Sept 2021 - Awaiting validation)	14.6 (DFE Census Sept 2020)	Not a target measure	14	15	13	12	12	13	13	13	13	12	13	13	14	15	14	13	14	12	13	11	10																			
Indicators 27 & 28 : * all pupils educated in Merton Schools (including special schools)																																															
Indicators 29, 30 & 31: *** all pupils educated in Merton Schools (excluding special Schools)																																															
Indicators 39 & 40** Quarterly and monthly data reported from live date reported by Human Resource or Mosaic respectively. There is no direct comparable benchmarkable data as the DfE uses a different definition of a 'social worker' for the purpose of who is included in the annual Children's Social Workforce Census.																																															

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

**Date:** 13 March 2023

**Subject:** Planning the Panel's 2023/24 work programme

**Wards:** All

**Lead officer:** Stella Akintan, Scrutiny Officer

**Lead member:** Councillor Usaama Kaweesa, Chair of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

**Contact officer:** Stella Akintan (stella.akintan@merton.gov.uk/020 8545 3390)

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### **Recommendations:**

- A. That the Panel reviews its 2022/23 work programme (set out in the appendix), identifying what worked well, what worked less well and what the Panel would like to do differently next year;
  - B. That the Panel suggests items for inclusion in the 2023/24 work programme – both agenda items and potential task group review topics; and
  - C. That the Panel advises on agenda items for its meeting on 21 June 2023.
- 

## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To enable the Panel to plan its work programme for the forthcoming municipal year and, in particular, to agree agenda items for the first meeting of the municipal year.

## **2. DETAILS**

### Identifying issues for the 2023/24 work programme

- 2.1 At the beginning of each municipal year, each Overview and Scrutiny body determines the issues it wishes to build into its work programme for the forthcoming year. The Overview and Scrutiny bodies have specific roles relating to budget and business plan scrutiny and performance monitoring, and these should automatically be built into the work programme.
- 2.2 In addition to this, Overview and Scrutiny bodies may choose to build a work programme which involves scrutinising a range of issues through a combination of pre-decision scrutiny items, policy development reviews carried out by task groups, performance monitoring, on-going monitoring items and follow up to previous scrutiny work.
- 2.3 The remit of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel is as follows:
  - 2.3.1. Children's social care, including child protection;
  - 2.3.2. Education, including school standards, special educational needs and disability and the healthy schools initiative;
  - 2.3.3. Youth services and youth engagement, including the Youth Parliament, young people 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET)

2.3.4. Youth offending;

2.3.5. Children's health, including public health, community care and NHS provision

2.4 The scrutiny officers are currently gathering suggestions for issues to scrutinise, either as Panel agenda items or task group reviews. Suggestions are being sought from members of the public, councillors and partner organisations including the police, NHS and Merton voluntary services, the council's departmental management teams are being consulted in order to identify forthcoming issues on which the Panel could contribute to the policymaking process.

2.5 The Panel is therefore invited to suggest items for inclusion in the 2023/24 work programme – both agenda items and potential task group review topics.

2.6 All the suggestions received will be discussed at the Panel's topic workshop on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023. As in previous years, participants will be asked to prioritise the suggestions using criteria so that the issues chosen relate to:

- The Council's strategic priorities;
- Services that are underperforming;
- Issues of public interest or concern; and
- Issues where scrutiny could make a difference

#### Planning the first meeting of the 2023/24 municipal year

2.7 A note of the workshop discussion and draft work programme will be reported to the first meeting of the Panel in the new municipal year. The Panel will be requested to discuss this draft and agree any changes that it wishes to make.

2.8 The Panel is asked to advise on any other items that it would be helpful to include on the agenda for its 21 June 2023 meeting.

### **3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

3.1 The Panel can select topics for scrutiny review and for other scrutiny work as it sees fit, taking into account views and suggestions from officers, partner organisations and the public.

### **4. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

4.1 To assist Members to identify and prioritise a work programme for 2023/24, the Scrutiny Team will undertake a consultation programme with Panel Members, co-opted members, members of the public, LB Merton Officers and Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to determine other issues/items for Members' consideration for inclusion in the Panel's 2023/24 work programme.

### **5. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are none specific to this report. Scrutiny work involves consideration of the financial, resource and property issues relating to the topic being scrutinised. Furthermore, scrutiny work will also need to assess the implications of any recommendations made to Cabinet, including specific financial, resource and property implications.

## **6. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Scrutiny work involves consideration of the legal and statutory issues relating to the topic being scrutinised. Furthermore, scrutiny work will also need to assess the implications of any recommendations made to Cabinet, including specific legal and statutory implications.

## **7. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 It is a fundamental aim of the scrutiny process to ensure that there is full and equal access to the democratic process through public involvement and engaging with local partners in scrutiny reviews. Furthermore, the outcomes of reviews are intended to benefit all sections of the local community.

7.2 Scrutiny work involves consideration of the human rights, equalities and community cohesion issues relating to the topic being scrutinised. Furthermore, scrutiny work will also need to assess the implications of any recommendations made to Cabinet, including specific human rights, equalities and community cohesion implications.

## **8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 Scrutiny work involves consideration of the crime and disorder issues relating to the topic being scrutinised.

## **9. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are none specific to this report. Scrutiny work involves consideration of the risk management and health and safety issues relating to the topic being scrutinised. Furthermore, scrutiny work will also need to assess the implications of any recommendations made to Cabinet, including specific risk management and health and safety implications.

## **10. APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT**

10.1 2022/23 work programme

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 None

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# Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel - Work Programme 2022/2023



This table sets out the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel work programme for 2022/23; the items listed were agreed by the Panel at its meeting on 22 June 2022. This work programme will be considered at every meeting of the Panel to enable it to respond to issues of concern and incorporate reviews or to comment on pre-decision items ahead of their consideration by Cabinet/Council.

The work programme table shows items on a meeting-by-meeting basis, identifying the issue under review, the nature of the scrutiny (pre-decision, policy development, issue specific, performance monitoring, partnership related) and the intended outcomes.

**Chair:** Councillor Usaama Kaweesa  
**Vice-chair:** Councillor Chessie Flack

## **Scrutiny Support**

For further information on the work programme of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel please contact: -  
Stella Akintan, Scrutiny Officer  
Tel: 020 8545 3390; Email: [stella.akintan@merton.gov.uk](mailto:stella.akintan@merton.gov.uk)

For more information about overview and scrutiny at LB Merton, please visit [www.merton.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.merton.gov.uk/scrutiny)

**Meeting date:** 29 September 2022 (***Deadline for papers:*** 12pm, 20 September 2022)

<b>Item/issue</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Lead member and/or lead officer</b>	<b>Intended outcomes</b>
Departmental update including update on: safety valve support given to pupils with English as an additional language. Attain Programme	Report to the Panel	Jane McSherry, Director of Children Schools, and Families	Review priority work streams within the Children Schools and Families Department.
SEND Strategy and Written Statement of Action	Report to the Panel	Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, Assistant Director of Education and Early Help	Scrutiny of the current SEND strategy
Performance monitoring	Basket of indicators	Head of Policy, Strategy and Performance	To review the basket of indicators
Work programme 2022/23	Written Report	Stella Akintan, Scrutiny Officer	To review the work programme and agree any changes



**Meeting date:** 10 November 2022 (**Deadline for papers:** 12pm 01 November 2022)

<b>Item/issue</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Lead member and/or lead officer</b>	<b>Intended outcomes</b>
Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report.	Report to the Panel	Independent Scrutineer Sarah Lawrence and Young Inspector.	Review the work of the Partnership.
Child Healthy Weight Programme.	Report to the Panel	Julia Groom, Consultant in Public Health	To Scrutinise the projects within this programme
Departmental Update	Report to the Panel	Jane McSherry, Director of Children Schools and Families	Review priority work streams within the Children Schools and Families Department.
Performance monitoring	Basket of indicators	Head of Policy, Planning and Performance	To review the Basket of indicators and highlight items of concern
Work programme 2022/23	Written Report	Stella Akintan, Scrutiny Officer	To review the work programme and agree any changes

**Meeting date:** 11 January 2023 (**Deadline for papers:** 12pm 3 January 2023)

Item/issue	How	Lead member and/or lead officer	Intended outcomes
Budget/business plan scrutiny	Written Report	Councillor Billy Christie, Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services	To discuss and make recommendations to forward to Cabinet
Departmental update report including Speech and language services Alternative education provision Support for gifted and talented pupils	Written Report	Jane McSherry, Director of Children, Schools and Families	An overview of the key issues within the Children, Schools and Families Department.
Cabinet Member Priorities	Verbal Update	Councillor Sally Kenny, Cabinet Member for Education and Life Long Learning  Councillor Brenda Fraser, Cabinet Member for Children's Services	To scrutinise the Cabinet Member's priorities and key areas of concern
Children and Young people's Participation and Engagement in Scrutiny	Written Report	Councillor Brenda Fraser, Cabinet Member for Children's Services.	A report setting out plans to involve young people in scrutiny.
Performance monitoring		Maisie Davies, Head of Policy, Planning and Performance	To review the Basket of indicators and highlight items of concern

Work programme 2022/23	Written Report	Stella Akintan, Scrutiny Officer	To review the work programme and agree any changes
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**Meeting date:** 08 February 2023 (*Deadline for papers: 12pm 31 January 2023*)

Item/issue	How	Lead member and/or lead officer	Intended outcomes
Departmental update report	Written Report	Jane McSherry Executive Director of Children, Lifelong Learning and Families	An overview of the key issues within the Children, Schools and Families Department.
Mental health and wellbeing of children and young people	Written Report	Keith Shipman, Head of Education Inclusion	Panel to receive an update on this issue to ensure that services are meeting the needs of residents in Merton
Task Group updates: Youth task group Mental Health	Verbal updates	Task Group Chair	Panel to receive an update on the work of the task groups

**Meeting date:** 15 March 2023 (**Deadline for papers:** 12pm 02 March 2023)

Item/issue	How	Lead member and/or lead officer	Intended outcomes
Departmental Update Report: Care leavers accommodation Foster carer recruitment Support to young children (0-5), who have been identified as having significant special needs. including the Portage services	Report to the Panel	Jane McSherry, Director Children, Schools and Families	An overview of the key issues within the Children, Schools and Families Department.
Special Meeting on Cllr's Corporate Parenting Role - including presentation on Cllr Corporate Parenting responsibilities and Corporate Parenting Annual Report.	Report/Presentation	Jane McSherry, Director Children, Schools and Families	Review Corporate Parenting role and the work undertaken in this area.
Performance monitoring	Basket of indicators	Maisie Davies, Head of Policy, Planning and Performance	To review the Basket of indicators and highlight items of concern
Schools Standards Annual Report	Written Report	Elizabeth Fitzpatrick Assistant Director of Education and Early Help	To scrutinise attainment information

		Keith Shipman, Head of Education Inclusion	
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